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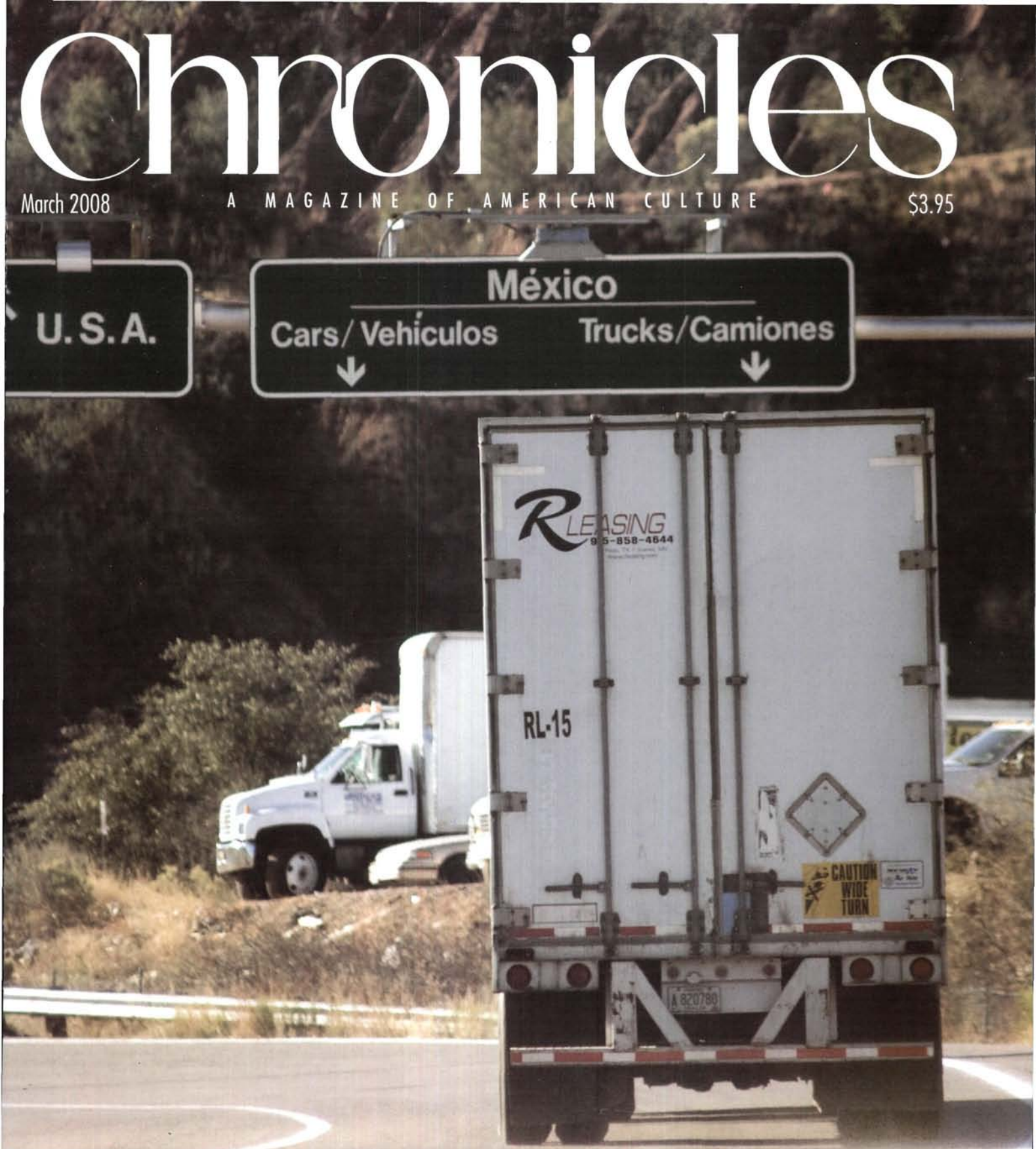

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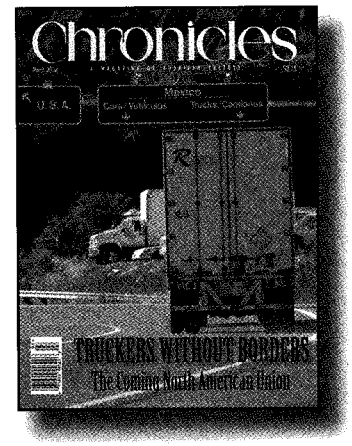

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Mackerel Snappers

In his review of Joseph Pearce's *Small Is Still Beautiful: Economics as if Families Mattered* ("Big Is Still Ahead," *Reviews*, January), Kirkpatrick Sale writes, "True enough, Schumacher became a Catholic just before *Small Is Beautiful* came out in 1973 and remained devout until his death in 1977 . . . But his classic book has no discernible Catholic influence and is based on articles and lectures he wrote before his conversion. It's odd to read Catholicism into it."

This is an oversight on Mr. Sale's part. In Chapter Two ("Peace and Permanence") of *Small Is Beautiful*, Schumacher writes, "The third requirement is perhaps the most important of all—that methods and equipment should be such as to leave ample room for human creativity. Over the last hundred years no-one has spoken more insistently and warningly on this subject than have the Roman pontiffs. What becomes of a man if the process of production 'takes away from work any hint of humanity, making of it a merely mechanical activity'? The worker himself is turned into a perversion of a free being. 'And so bodily labour (said Pius XI) which even after original sin was decreed by Providence for the good of man's body and soul, is in many instances changed into an instrument of perversion; for from the factory dead matter goes out improved, whereas men there are corrupted and degraded'. Again, the subject is so large that I cannot do more than touch upon it."

Quoting pontiffs seems to indicate a discernible Catholic influence. It is more odd to read Catholicism *out* of the book, when one also considers the numerous scriptural references and the presence of the Catholic teaching that the family is the building block of society.

—Matthew Soileau
Oakdale, LA

Mr. Sale Replies:

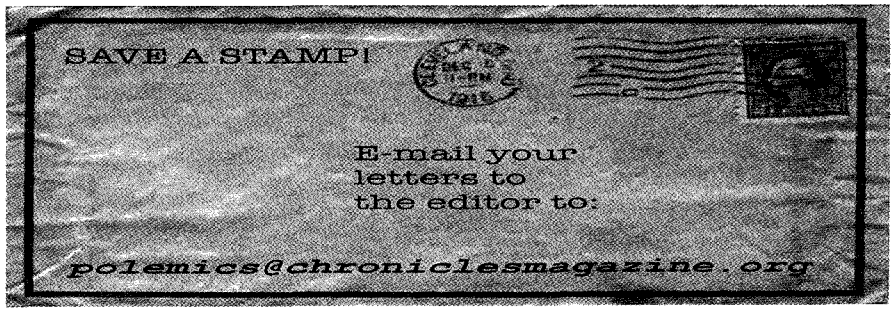
Just because I like to quote various popes' denunciation of materialism as a persuasive critique of our capitalist culture doesn't mean that I have, I trust, any discernible Catholic influences. But I am willing to grant that increasing Catholic themes may have been coming into Schumacher's thought by 1970, when the chapter in question was written.

On Writing Philosophy

I love reading good writing and often find it in *Chronicles*, but Donald Livingston's January *View* "What Is Wrong With Ideology?" is not just well written but beautifully crafted. Its presence in the magazine shows just what *Chronicles* is capable of, and why it is so valuable to readers.

I'm not sure if I am in tune with Dr. Livingston's use of the word *reflection* or *reflective* (I like to think of myself as reflective), but it may just be that my simple view of those terms gets in the way, and I need to work that problem out. In any case, thank you, Dr. Livingston, for a wonderful short course in philosophy.

—Howard Sitton
Carmel Valley, CA



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by Tom Piatak

Rudy the Unready

Not so long ago, Rudy Giuliani was the consensus front runner for the Republican presidential nomination. He had won the first beauty contest of the primary season, from the nation's most self-important electorate, the neoconservative punditariat: George Will, Norman Podhoretz, John Podhoretz, David Frum, and Richard Brookhiser all lined up behind Giuliani, together with an assortment of lesser-known malefactors who make a living sharing their ill-considered opinions with the rest of us. Finally, it seemed, the GOP was ready to give the social conservatives who embarrass much of the party's elite a candidate whose public opinion on such issues as abortion, illegal immigration, and "gay rights" matches the private opinion of much of that elite on those issues. And, as a result of the media consensus in his favor, Giuliani led in the national polls for months.

Something changed once real voters began casting real ballots. Giuliani suffered embarrassing defeat after embarrassing defeat: four percent in the Iowa caucuses, behind Ron Paul's ten percent; nine percent in the New Hampshire primary, barely ahead of Ron Paul's eight percent; zero delegates in the Wyoming caucuses, behind Duncan Hunter's one; three percent in the Michigan primary, behind Ron Paul's six percent; four percent in the Nevada caucuses, well behind Ron Paul's fourteen percent; and two percent in the South Carolina primary, behind Ron Paul's four percent and well behind the semicomatose Fred Thompson's sixteen percent. The Giuliani campaign tried to explain these defeats away by arguing that it had made a strategic decision to bypass these states, but the fact is that Giuliani made numerous appearances in Iowa and especially New Hampshire, before concluding he was going nowhere in those states.

Despite his dismal performance through South Carolina, there was still a slim chance that Giuliani could have gained the Republican nomination. That chance was based on the hope that Giuliani would win the Florida primary, which then would have catapulted him back into the national race and positioned him to do well in the 24 states selecting delegates on Super Tuesday. Giuliani's advisors had focused on Super Tuesday because voters in those states had less opportunity to learn about the candidates, none of whom was able to spend much time in any one of those states. In other words, Giuliani's only hope for victory was that the voters on February 5 would be ignorant and ill-informed.

That strategy was killed *in utero*, however, after Giuliani suffered a crushing defeat in the Florida primary, finishing third with 15 percent behind Mitt Romney's 31 percent and John McCain's 36 percent—and barely ahead of Mike Huckabee's 13 percent. The next day, Giuliani withdrew from the race and endorsed McCain.

The reason for Giuliani's collapse is twofold: The issues that matter to voters are not the issues that matter to Giuliani's neocon advisors, and the more Republican voters learned about the thrice-married adulterer who had turned New York into a "sanctuary city" for illegal aliens, favored gun control, marched in gay-pride parades, and proclaimed January 22, 1998, "*Roe* v. *Wade* Anniversary Day" in New York City, the less they liked.

Giuliani bet his campaign on the belief that the "War on Terror" is now the premier social issue, as Jonah Goldberg has argued, and that the voters are as eager for an endless war against "Islamofascism" as are his foreign-policy advisors Norman Podhoretz and David Frum. It was not a wise bet. There is concern over Iraq even among Republicans, and, at this point, more Americans are worried about an impending recession than are worried about Iran. In each of the five states for which exit or entrance polls are available, more voters cited the economy as the most important issue than cited Giuliani's signature issue of terrorism, with the economy beating out terrorism by such lopsided margins as 55 percent to 11 percent in Michigan and 40 percent to 15 percent in South Carolina.

In fact, despite the Giuliani campaign's emphasis on national security, Giuliani's foreign-policy experience is virtually nonexistent. His much-touted snubs of Yasser Arafat and the Saudis while mayor of New York signify little beyond a keen sense of what it takes to succeed in New York politics, and, before Giuliani withdrew, the NYC fire-fighters union had set up a website, *www.rudy-urbanlegend.com*, seeking to do to Giuliani what the Swift Boat veterans did to John Kerry by arguing that "Rudy has used the horrible events of September 11 to create a persona that is an elaborate fabrication. He is nothing more than a shameless self-promoter."

The other reason Giuliani failed is that GOP voters learned more about him. Despite the manifest failures of the politicians they vote for, many GOP voters actually value traditional morality, believe that abortion is evil, want to curb immigration, and are serious about the Second Amendment. Thus, once voters learned that Giuliani had a tawdry personal history, favored abortion, "gay rights," and gun control, and had actively resisted efforts to enforce immigration laws as mayor of New York, his support among GOP voters plunged. It turns out that the traditional social issues remain the real social issues after all. ◈

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IMMIGRANT BIRTHRIGHT

Any doubts you may have had about the absurdity and falseness of American electoral politics would have been removed if you had lived through the barrage of advertising that preceded our South Carolina presidential primary. Every single one of the Republican candidates pretended to have become Horatio at the Bridge, singlehandedly holding back the onslaught of illegal aliens. Mr. Huckabee even claimed that he feels kin to us fellows driving pickup trucks with Confederate flags. And despite the Eighth Commandment, the Rev. Mr. H. appropriated Dr. Paul's issue of "birthright citizenship," proposing a constitutional amendment against the fraud of new citizens being created by virtue of being relatives of innocent "anchor babies" born on our soil to illegal aliens. Mr. Thompson—a layman, admittedly—then violated the Ninth Commandment by saying he would himself "reconsider" the issue, asking us to suspend our disbelief that he had ever considered it a first time.

An early U.S. Congress defined a citizen as a free white person born or naturalized in the United States. That indicated who Americans thought they were and intended to remain, though it was mainly concerned with defining status as to protection in international matters. Although the Constitution called for uniform rules of naturalization, citizenship long remained a matter determined by the states. And in the states, it was determined less by legal technicalities than by society—immigrants who were adopted into American communities or who formed communities acceptable to their neighbors were treated as citizens. At the time, citizenship did not confer a claim on government handouts and, in fact, involved obligations and duties of self-government to be exercised in regard to the jury box, the ballot box, and the cartridge box.

Then came that great rub of all rubs, the War Against Southern Independence. It was necessary to clarify the status of some millions of black persons who heretofore in federal law and jurisprudence, and in the constitutions and laws of all but a few states, were not citizens, whether slave or free. Thus, the Fourteenth Amendment: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States . . . "

The amendment, fraudulently ratified and laden with infinite mischief, was intended to meet the particular problem of the freed people's status. Of course, its true intent was to allow Republicans to enlist the black vote in the South and thus permanently control the Union—and, as some historians have plausibly argued, to pave the way for corporations to have federal immunities from state interference as "persons."

The bit about "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" was the troublesome part, since it might be construed to apply to persons who were neither born in nor naturalized in the United States. It was not until 1898 that the Supreme Court gave "birthright citizenship" to all "legal residents." Even then, there was a question about the Indians who, it seems, were not intended to be covered by the Fourteenth Amendment. (Those who did not confer citizenship on babies born to American Indians could hardly have intended conferring it on babies born here to Mexican Indians.) It is complicated, but as far as I can tell, there has never been a definitive law or court decision that automatically makes children born to illegal immigrants citizens. But that seems long to have been the accepted practice, which is not surprising, since 20th-century America was pretty well seduced by the charming fable of the Melting Pot—that Americans are a new international race of men without borders, united only by common benevolent emotions.

Mr. Huckabee says he would propose a constitutional amendment clarifying whether citizenship is a matter of parentage or place of birth. This would doubtless be a good thing, if it could be accomplished. However, we know that promoting a constitutional amendment that can never be ratified is a familiar trick Republican politicians use to dodge hard issues. Not to mention that it is brought forward by an aspirant to high office who, only yesterday, wanted to make millions of illegals into instant citizens. In this, as in many other cases, a constitutional amendment is not needed. What is needed is for Americans to make up their minds who they are and what they want to continue to be.

—Clyde Wilson

TO CATCH A TERRORIST

The watershed U.S. Supreme Court decisions *Roe* v. *Wade* and *Doe* v. *Bolton*, we are told, "empowered women" to control their lives. In reality, they empowered the Police State and set the U.S. Imperium on a trajectory where it not only could deny the personhood of the unborn but could legally classify whole groups of people who object to the Imperium, at home and abroad, as nonpersons—individuals who can be rounded up, imprisoned, tortured, and deprived of our traditional legal provisions.

Today, civil libertarians of the right and the left deplore the growing Police State; they object to the fact that citizens can be arrested, tasered, and detained without cause; that their phone calls, e-mails, and other private communications, as well as their travel, can be monitored; that citizens must exercise prior restraint on their very thoughts.

They can thank *Roe* and *Doe* for all of that.

Government violence against prolifers peaked during the reigns of Republican Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Hundreds of peaceful pro-life demonstrators were beaten, their arms, wrists, and shoulders, broken. In the late 80's, as pro-

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life "rescue" operations took place, police in West Hartford, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, and other cities removed their badges and name tags before assaulting old men and women, sexually tormenting young women, and incarcerating protestors, who were held without charges for prolonged periods. When such scenes were videotaped, even by local television reporters, police or judges seized and often destroyed the film and cameras.

According to the American Life League, between 1987 and 1996, 100,000 American pro-lifers risked arrest, and 70,000 were arrested and stood at show trials, without a whimper from civil libertarians on the left—the honorable Nat Hentoff excepted.

Meanwhile, as government officials and members of the media began increasingly to refer to peaceful anti-abortion protestors as terrorists, real Middle Eastern terrorists got a free pass to enter the United States, train at flight schools and plot large-scale terrorist activities, overstay their visas, travel abroad unrestricted, and even, in the case of September 11 ringleader Mohammed Atta, run a business in Toronto manufacturing fake ID cards.

Halfway between the February 26, 1993, bombing of the World Trade Center and the April 19, 1995, Oklahoma City bombing, Attorney General Janet Reno established a secret database known as VAAPCON (the Violence Against Abortion Providers Conspiracy), which collected data on tens of thousands of pro-lifers, including the late John Cardinal O'Connor of New York and other U.S. bishops.

That same month (August 1994), according to the Center for Cooperative Research, Omar al-Bayoumi, a young Saudi with extensive ties to the Riyadh government and its aviation industry, arrived in San Diego, where he made contact with a number of the September 11 hijackers.

In the 29 months between October 23, 1998, when James C. Kopp assassinated Buffalo abortionist Barnett Slepian, and March 29, 2001, when Kopp was arrested, nearly 300 FBI agents and other police, as well as agents of Interpol, were on Kopp's trail, interviewing anyone and everyone who had ever come into contact with him. But, as the 9/11 Commission Report revealed (but did not point out), when Kopp was captured, the entire U.S. intelligence "system was blinking red," indicating an imminent terrorist attack.

Overall, during these years when several dozen Middle Eastern terrorists were plotting from within the United States, there were, at any given time, between 11 and 39 FBI field agents (out of 11,000) pursuing rock-solid leads on Arab terrorists in U.S. flight schools.

In other words, the Clinton and Bush administrations devoted between 8 and 27 times the manpower to bringing James C. Kopp, whose victim was a specialist in late-term abortions, to justice.

By October 1998, when Kopp fired the shot he says was intended to wound Slepian, the FBI knew that the September 11 hijackers were all in place, were traveling with ease from the United States to Canada and abroad, and had a good bead on their Saudi funding sources.

According to the Report of the Joint Inquiry Into the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001, FBI agents Robert Wright and John Vincent were tracking a Saudi terrorist cell in Chicago through the first half of 2001 but were told to take no action other than to follow the suspects around town and file reports. When they managed to trace the Al Qaeda operatives' funding to Saudi multimillionaire businessman Yassin al-Qadi, their supervisor told them not to make any arrests and thwarted the criminal investigation they sought.

And then, of course, "everything changed," and the Police State tactics the government employed against pro-lifers were applied to nearly everyone. In post-*Roe* America, only the state and its protectors enjoy the civil rights most Americans took for granted before 1973.

—*Paul Likoudis*

ROTTEN DEMOCRACY

For decades, Kenya has been an oasis of peace, compared with her neighbors Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, and Somalia. That changed on December 30, 2007.

After 24 years of the corrupt presidency of Daniel arap Moi, Kenyans had high hopes when, in December 2002, they elected Mwai Kibaki as their president for the next five years. President Kibaki appointed as Kenya's first "Corruption Czar" ("Permanent Secretary for Ethics and Governance") John Githongo, a man of impeccable integrity.

Githongo performed his duties well—so well, in fact, that he unearthed massive corruption within the Kibaki government itself. He learned, among other things, that a huge government contract had been handed to a nonexistent company, a scheme to transfer money from the pockets of the Kenyan taxpayers to those of some of President Kibaki's associates. When Githongo reported his discoveries to Kibaki, the president refused to support him. Then, after his life was

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threatened, Githongo decided it was prudent to live to fight another day. On January 24, 2005, he flew to England, tendered his resignation, and told the world what he had uncovered. He was called a traitor for criticizing Kenya from a foreign country.

Although we have been told that Kenya's economy has grown at an annual rate of five percent during Kibaki's presidency, ordinary Kenyans are unable to see any improvement. A few Kenyans are extravagantly wealthy, and a few more have a decent standard of living, but the vast majority still get by on less than one dollar per day—in a country where gasoline sells for five dollars per gallon.

Then, on December 27, 2007, the Kenyan people chose Raila Odinga as their new president. But, instead of accepting defeat, Kibaki and his cronies stole the election from the Kenyan people, in order to steal their money for five more years.

The rigging of the election took place crudely and openly. Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, chief observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM), reported on December 30, 2007, that "We regret that it has not been possible to address irregularities about which both the EU EOM and the ECK [Electoral Commission of Kenya] have evidence. The result for the Molo constituency, for example, was announced in the presence of EU EOM observers at the constituency tally centre as 50,145 votes for President Kibaki, while the ECK today declared the result for the President to be 75,261 votes." In some parts of Kibaki's home province, voter turnout exceeded 100 percent!

One of the clerks involved in tallying the votes, Kipkemoi Kirui, reported before television cameras what he had witnessed: "I left after the third constituency tally because of the shameless and blatant alteration of votes done at every section." The government responded with a news blackout. Later, Kibaki's spokesman said, "The only thing the President wants to do is to heal this nation, and the media is not part of that process."

Shortly after Kirui's courageous report of the election rigging, the chairman of the ECK, Samuel Kivuitu, announced that President Kibaki had been reelected. The Kenyan people—at least those with an understanding of the distinction between truth and falsehood—knew it was a lie. Minutes later, Kibaki was sworn in for a second five-year term. Two days later, Kivuitu said that he had acted under great pressure and admitted, "I do not know whether Kibaki won the election."

When Africans are told that they should choose their leaders the way Westerners choose theirs, when they turn out in large numbers to vote, and when the election victory is then stolen from them, some decide to seek justice by other means. Odinga was told by many voices that, if he was unhappy with the official election result, he should challenge it in the courts. That is absurd. Judicial decisions in Kenya are sold to the highest bidder. And, even if there were a just decision, it would not come before Kibaki completed his second term.

Within minutes of the deceitful announcement that President Kibaki had been reelected, the slums of Kenya erupted. Kibaki's government responded brutally. Kenyan policemen—who carry rifles, not pistols—began shooting protesters, as well as anyone else unlucky enough to be in the vicinity. In one case, a policeman shot and killed a mother and child. Another officer, from the same ethnic group as the innocent victims, shot and killed the first policeman. Kibaki and his cronies share responsibility for these deaths. But they don't care whether a few hundred innocent Kenyans are killed, so long as they can steal the taxpayers' money for another five years. And they know that the deaths of a few hundred poor Africans will soon be forgotten by the world's most powerful countries.

The U.S. State Department contributed to the injustice by imprudently congratulating Kibaki on his reelection and calling on all sides to accept the results. At the same time that we were killing Iraqis in order to spread democracy in the Middle East, we were recognizing as legitimate an African government that stole an election by blatant fraud, then gunned down those who were courageous enough to protest the violation of their democratic rights. Washington later withdrew the congratulations, but the damage had already been done.

Some elements of the Western media are contributing to the injustice by reporting that Kibaki won a close election and Odinga refused to accept defeat—a patent falsehood. Some Western media are also reporting that the violence is tribal. The violence in Kenya has become tribal, but it began with corruption committed by greedy people who happened to belong to particular ethnic groups. The violence in Kenya is fundamentally about economic injustice, not ethnic identity. Githongo belongs to the same ethnic group as Kibaki.

Odinga is being told by non-Kenyan leaders that he should "reach out" to, and "dialogue" with, Kibaki. Reaching out and dialoguing with thieves rarely solves problems. There will be no true peace in Kenya, until Mr. Kibaki admits that he lost the election and is no longer the president. If that does not happen, Kenya will become increasingly unstable—with adverse consequences for her already unstable neighbors.

—An American in Kenya

BOBBY FISCHER, R.I.P.

Bobby Fischer, the reclusive, troubled, and often unpleasant chess genius from Brooklyn who single-handedly crushed the myth of Soviet invincibility, died of kidney failure in Iceland on January 17 at the age of 64.

Robert James Fischer was born out of wedlock to a prominent Hungarian atomic physicist, Pal Nemenyi, who was involved with the Manhattan Project, and a Jewish-American woman whose communist sympathies took her to the Soviet Union on the eve of World War II. Nemenyi died soon thereafter, in 1952; "Bobby" never got to know him. The security implications of the affair were nevertheless obvious. A suspicion of links with the

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Soviet secret service surrounded the mother, and eventually the boy, for years to come.

An evident *Wunderkind* from the age of six, Fischer devoted his entire childhood and youth to chess. By 11, in his own words, he "just got good." Bored by school and human company, he gave up on both in 1958, when, at 15, he became the youngest grandmaster in history.

Fischer had an IQ of over 180 and an astonishing memory that enabled him to recall every move of all his championship games. On his way to the top, he turned opponents into victims, "destroying wills and usurping psyches." His lack of social skills and extravagant demands on tournament organizers were on par with his talent. His famous tantrums caused him to drop out of the game twice, before his historic victory in Reykjavik over the reigning world champion, Boris Spassky, in 1972.

That match was not only the pinnacle of his career but a memorable moment in the history of the Cold War. It may seem incredible to anyone under 40 that a game, however complex and ancient, should have prompted Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to plead with the already eccentric Fischer to go to Iceland. ("America wants you to go over there and beat the Russians.") But Dr. Kissinger knew that, for *those Russians*, chess was never a game. For millions, it was an escape from drab reality, while, for the *nomenklatura*, it was a propaganda weapon no less important than Sputnik or Olga Korbut. Fischer defeated Boris Spassky in the Match of the Century—and, for once, the contemporary hyperbole was justified.

The event was filled with Cold War drama. Soviet officials accused the United States of trying to throw off Spassky by using secret electronic devices pointed at their player. Fischer's chair and the whole playing area were subjected to a thorough examination. All light fixtures were removed from the ceiling, but only two dead flies were found inside them. A member of the Soviet delegation was finally rebuked for demanding that an autopsy be performed on the insects. Not to be outdone, Fischer had all fillings in his teeth replaced on the eve of the match, fearing the presence of Soviet implants that could be activated to distract him at crucial moments. On September 1, 1972, Fischer became world champion after Spassky conceded a match in which the brash challenger won 7 games, drew 11, and lost 3.

During his remaining 35 years after the Match of the Century, Fischer's life went steadily downhill. In 1975, after a long dispute with chess authorities, he refused to defend his title, thus giving it to the good Soviet boy Anatoly Karpov (now a "liberal, pro-Western reformist," of course). In his final decade, he would use Filipino radio talk shows to rail against the Jews, the United States, the commies, the Russians, both Bushes, the chess establishment, and the police in Pasadena, where Fischer was mistakenly arrested and detained for two days in 1981. On September 11, 2001, Fischer, now a self-avowed devotee of both *Mein Kampf* and the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, screamed for joy: "This is all wonderful news. It's time for the f--king U.S. to get their heads kicked in. To finish off the U.S. once and for all . . . I want to see the U.S. wiped out." Fischer's antics suggested that, as chess master and psychologist Bill Hartston claimed, "chess is not something that drives people mad," but "something that keeps mad people sane."

The news of Fischer's arrest in Japan in 2004, on a U.S. warrant for violating U.N. sanctions against Yugoslavia 12 years earlier by playing his old rival Boris Spassky there, echoed across the globe. It was as if a forgotten silent-movie star, long presumed dead, had suddenly turned up in a blaze of publicity. Just as extradition seemed imminent, Iceland's unexpected offer of asylum saved the day. The offer was the result of a campaign by Icelanders who felt that Fischer put their lonely island on the map and deserved to be repaid for the favor. The decision by a tiny country to risk American displeasure for the sake of gratitude to an eccentric has-been stood in stark contrast to the bigger and more powerful European countries' willingness blithely to follow Washington's lead on most issues that matter.

On balance, it is a good thing that Fischer died as a free man in a foreign country. He was not guilty of any crime. His radio harangues, reprehensible *per se* and damaging to his reputation, were no worse than thousands of remarks heard in mosques and Islamic centers all over the United States every Friday. His original alleged sin—violating the U.N. sanctions—was an absurd charge that should have been ruled unconstitutional because it was based on the transfer of legislative authority to the president on behalf of an evil institution.

Had Bobby Fischer ended up in a cage like Ezra Pound, the story would have had a more melodramatic finale. It is nevertheless comforting to know that there is a plucky little island out there in the Northern Atlantic that has not succumbed, yet, to the ugly Leviathan that presumes to order our lives and our thoughts.

—Srdja Trifkovic

OBITER DICTA

Making her debut in the pages of *Chronicles* is our poet, **Stella Nesanovich**. A professor of English at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana, she is the author of *A Brightness That Made My Soul Tremble: Poems on the Life of Hildegard of Bingen* (Blue Heron Press, 1996) and *Vespers at Mount Angel: Poems* (Xavier Review Press, 2004) and editor of *Points of Gold: Poems for Leo Luke Marcello* (Xavier Review Press, 2005). Her poetry has appeared in several anthologies and in numerous journals and magazines.

Our cover photo is provided by **Gregory McNamee** of Tucson, Arizona. A widely published writer, editor, and photographer, Mr. McNamee is the author, most recently, of *Moveable Feasts* (Praeger, 2006).

Our interior art is provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

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by Thomas Fleming

Our Open (Borders) Secret

The long campaign of 2007-08, already sputtering out in fizzled squibs, childish ploys, and pointless personal recriminations, has offered few of the moments of drama or high comedy that Americans have rightly come to expect of our political candidates. The debates have been as drab as Hillary Clinton's pantsuits, as wooden as Barack Obama's imitation of Al Sharpton, and as predictable as Mitt Romney's second thoughts on abortion and immigration.

For comedy, the best act so far has been Mike Huckabee's appearances in South Carolina, where he was flanked by Chuck Norris and Ric "The Nature Boy" Flair, whom he introduced as his secretaries of defense and homeland security. I think I would rather vote for Naitch, who knows he is an entertainer and not an athlete, than for a politician who would use a rassler as part of his act.

But even Huckabee's clowning, deplorable as it is, falls far short of the performances of Bob Dole, backed up by Sam and Dave imitators singing "The Dole Man," or the unintentional parody of priggish liberalism performed by Happy Hubert Humphrey, or Jimmy Carter's antics (the "adultery in my heart" confession to *Playboy* or, best of all, his proclamation "I will never lie to you"—perhaps the greatest lie ever told by an American politician, and that is saying something). I have not even mentioned Jimmy's wonderful family—his beer-bellied brother Billy or his evangelist sister who "converted" pornographer Larry Flynt. Flynt was so touched by grace that he did an Adam and Eve spread in *Hustler*, naturally in the best of taste. At least we have our memories!

Populists have often provided campaigns both with drama and with actual issues. The peroration to William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech was still being memorized by at least one schoolboy in the 1950's, and Huey Long and George Wallace both scared the bejeezus out of the partitocrats. I do not know why Long was shot, but Governor Wallace certainly gave the GOP a good reason to eliminate him, as Martha Mitchell told the press before being hustled off to an institution. Chuck Colson, who went to Arthur Bremer's apartment allegedly to plant Democrat propaganda, might know something, but he is not talking.

Political assassination is as American as apple pie, and, as I told Pat Buchanan, when he mentioned something about reforming the Republican Party, the last man who tried that was James Garfield, and he was murdered by a professed "Republican stalwart," whose credo was "My party, right or wrong." Threatening to reform either party is like getting between the lion and his prey.

The nearest thing to a populist in this race is the mild-mannered Ron Paul. Despite his timid demeanor—in the 50's he would have inevitably been compared to Wally Cox—Dr. Paul has his zany side: He believes in the Constitution of the old American republic, and he actually thinks it has some relevance for America today. God bless him, I would vote for him if only for pretending to embrace such a heartwarming fantasy. As it is, I am convinced he believes what he says. (His candor and sincerity alone are enough to disqualify him as a serious presidential candidate in these United States.) Paul not only wants, in principle, to restore the republic but also opposes the continued erosion of states' rights and U.S. sovereignty.

Ron Paul's most flamboyant gesture in defense of the republic (one in which he is joined by the estimable Duncan Hunter) has been the denunciation of what is sometimes called the North American Union. The NAU is an alleged plot to merge the three countries of North America—the United States, Canada, and Mexico—into a union that will function something like the European Union. If the first step toward unification is represented by the "NAFTA Superhighway"—a free-trade hole in the American border stretching from Mexico to Canada—the apogee will be the issuance of a new common currency, the Amero.

World government has been a treasured bugbear of the fringe right since the heyday of the John Birch Society, and the current conspiracy has supposedly been cooked up by the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bush administration, and the usual globalist suspects. In 2005, the CFR issued a report, "Building a North American Community," whose aspirations were echoed in the Bush administration's plan "Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America" (SPP), released after a meeting among George W. Bush, Vicente Fox, and Paul Martin. The plan, which is predicated on the idea that "our security and prosperity are mutually dependent and complementary," calls for a joint task force to implement the goals: common security and a common market.

Representative Paul has denounced the SPP as "an unholy alliance of foreign consortiums and officials from several governments" that does not even enjoy the legal fig leaf of an official treaty. The more general conclusion he draws is that "decisions that affect millions of Americans are not being made by those Americans themselves, or even by their elected representatives in Congress," but by "a handful of elites [who] use their government connections to by-

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pass national legislatures and ignore our Constitution."

The introduction of the NAFTA Superhighway and the SPP into the campaign debate naturally aroused snorts of contempt, and not without reason. The alleged plotters—the leaders of three democratic governments (the United States, Canada, and Mexico), joined by the beloved Republican governor of Texas (Rick Perry) and the most prestigious policy experts at the CFR (which includes most of the important senior members of past administrations)—are no back-alley conspirators. The CFR, of which both Presidents Bush are members, has never made a secret of its commitment to world government, and the American presidents and leading economists who have supported NAFTA, GATT, and the WTO express the consensus, not of the people of America, but of the people who own America and dictate the editorial policies of both the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. If you find this statement shocking or surprising, you have not been paying attention to the world around you.

Only a good scout like Ron Paul (or Pat Buchanan before him) could sincerely believe that the erosion of sovereignty is an issue that will arouse the American electorate to cast off the chains of the party state that tells them how to treat their spouses and rear their children, whose children to reward with benefits at the expense of their own, and what to eat and where to smoke a cigar. As an impudent young man, I told my father that his generation—"the greatest generation"—had sold out our liberties by reelecting FDR and by accepting the withholding of federal income tax from our salaries. At least since the time my voice changed, I have known that I do not live in a free country: What I know about republican liberty I have learned from books.

There is no secret plot or conspiracy to undermine our national sovereignty, unless, by conspiracy, we mean the collective will of the political class. Messrs. Fox and Bush would be rightly outraged if they heard rumors of such suspicions. Opposing globalization today is like criticizing affirmative action, challenging women's rights, or pointing out that homosexuals are a serious drain on our finite medical resources. All right-thinking people, whatever their party or orientation, support globalization. It is a movement whose virtues are so obvious that Cato staffers cannot even understand why anyone could be upset with the idea of a North American Union. Here is young Cato policy analyst Will Wilkinson on National Public Radio's anti-business program, *Marketplace*:

> There are some who believe a grave threat to American sovereignty looms over the horizon. A shadowy cabal, they say, is planning a massive "NAFTA superhighway," a new North American currency, and a common market in goods and labor. It will all culminate in an E.U.-like North American Union. It turns out this is mostly fantasy. But the fantasy is more dream than nightmare. Because some aspects of a North American Union would leave Americans and our neighbors both richer and freer.

You see, he explains to the rubes, in making it more difficult for migrants to enter the United States, we have also made it harder for them to leave:

> Those who do come now are more likely to stay. And this has increased the permanent population of undocumented Mexicans. The best solution to America's immigration problem is not a wall or a new crackdown on the hiring of undocumented workers. It's NAFTA's unfinished business: a common North American labor market.

The real problem of illegal immigration is that it is illegal. If we simply throw our borders open to the world and say, "Give us . . . the wretched refuse of your teeming shores," the problem will go away, and we shall all live happily ever after, as Cato's Steve Moore once said in a debate with Peter Brimelow and me, buying our fruit from Korean grocers and hiring foreign nannies to take care of the children our wives refuse to rear themselves. We could adopt the same approach to other social ills: Legalize rape, and the rapist will be less reluctant to seek treatment for his problem; legalize armed robbery, and the robbers will more readily pay taxes on their earnings.

For the libertarians at Cato, globalization, free trade, and immigration present no problem, because, as the editor of the *Wall Street Journal* once famously declared, "The nation-state is finished." Many libertarians would add that the demise of nation-states has come none too soon, since they never should have existed. They are not entirely wrong. Nationalism has almost as many sins on its record as the Marxism that killed hundreds of millions in the 20th century or the classical liberalism/libertarianism that destroyed the social and moral order of Europe and the United States. One of the only true insights Marxists ever had was that the liberal ruling class

> has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

If the international system of large nation-states were to be replaced by confederations of regions and smaller com-

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munities, a Chestertonian might rejoice in the possibilities. Such a scenario is hardly likely, however, because it is not in the interest of the groups who preside today over the breaking of nations.

Some form of international empire will undoubtedly be the result of the current drive toward reducing and eliminating national sovereignty. This is hardly cause for alarm. Although many conservatives would like to believe that the nation-state is a universal phenomenon, it is, in fact, an historical creation, hardly older than the 15th century. The states of France and England, to name just two successful examples, were created by ambitious monarchies with the assistance of the equally ambitious aristocrats and businessmen who saw the nation-state as a vehicle for their own interests.

Even churches joined the movement—not only the Protestant national churches of England, Scotland, and Germany that toadied to the rulers who confiscated Church assets and distributed them to their friends, but the pliant and venal Catholic bishops of France and, eventually, of the Habsburg empire. In any such enterprise, factions develop, and the grandchildren of Henry VIII's wool lords wrested power from Henry's sister's great-great-grandson, Charles I. However, the goal of the Roundheads was not to weaken the state but to strengthen it. The same can be said of the Jacobin lawyers who murdered the kindest man who ever sat upon the French throne, from Clovis to Napoleon III. Robespierre was as committed to nation-building as Louis XIV.

This is, of course, a Machiavellian point of view, one that concentrates exclusively on power. States and their governments can be looked at from several perspectives. From a Christian perspective, the rulers of this world have been empowered by God to protect the innocent and punish the wicked. From an ethnic and cultural point of view, our form of government reflects the character of the people: A system of loose monarchy, independent nobles, and sturdy freemen was an expression of the Anglo-Saxon character, just as the cult of plutocracy and celebrity, matched by the servility of the people, expresses the American character today. We laugh at the servility of the Indians and Pakistanis who choose party leaders on the strength of their last names (Gandhi and Bhutto), then go out to cheer for George W. Bush and Hillary Clinton.

In swearing eternal allegiance to the divinely appointed Clintons and Bushes, and in revering the traditions of the Morgans and Rockefellers, a prudent man might also take account of the basic facts of power. It was Gaetano Mosca who explained that the character of an elite impressed itself upon the character of the regime, and it is only a small step from Mosca's insight to viewing regimes as the vehicles by which an elite maintains and extends its wealth and power.

What can be said of the nation-state applies to all forms of government, including Marxist dictatorships: They serve the interests of the ruling class or party. Just as the commune of medieval Florence was a corporate association of the greater guilds in the interest of the bankers and wool merchants, so (as Milovan Djilas argued) communist governments serve the interests of the party members who "eliminate every form of property except their own."

For the old union of the United States, the handwriting has been on the wall for decades. A century ago, national business interests used their clout to eliminate the power of state governments to interfere in their ability to expand and monopolize new markets. Now, since at least the 1970's, transnational business interests are working to eliminate the power of nation-states to interfere in their ability to expand and monopolize new markets. Global markets require global regulation in the interest of the global competitors who seek to be global monopolists, and global regulations require a global state with a global army, global courts, and global police. A Bill Gates or a Ross Perot can make billions by selling to select national governments, but trillions are available to those who will control a global government. Regional integration is only a necessary intermediate step. There is no point in complaining, just as there is no point in blaming the tiger who eats the missionary: The beasts are made this way.

International protests against globalization are led by Marxian leftists, who are the last people in the world to lead such a movement: They have been calling for some form of global regime since the Communist Manifesto. But American conservatives are scarcely in a better position. Since the creation of *National Review*, conservatives have sacrificed every principle of morality, tradition, and civilization upon the altar of a "free market" that has never really existed, certainly not in the United States. To be fair, all that conservatives ever really meant by the "free market" was big business. Today's conservative editorialists are only doing what they have always done: They are shilling for their paymasters. Their intellectual ancestors shilled for liberal nation-states, but, for the conservative-libertarian movement, transnationalism, as the kids would say, is the new nationalism, a pretext for destroying everything real that we have inherited and replacing the reality of peoples and their traditions with the virtual reality sold to us by Microsoft, Wal-Mart, and the Hollywood-New York axis that shapes our dreams.

Our rulers, cheered on by their mouthpieces in the press, have even succeeded in cashing out the family, not only by promoting divorce, public schooling, and adultery, but by driving mothers into the workplace, outsourcing family functions to soccer teams, and persuading families to dine at corporate-owned junk-food restaurants such as McDonald's or Applebee's. Viewed in this light, the North American Union will be a comparatively trivial step in the evolution of post-human America. ◈

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by Joseph Sobran

The Future of Tyranny

My mother, an incurable Democrat, God forgive her, adored Adlai Stevenson. To her mind, he and Richard Nixon offered the extreme and opposite poles of spiritual reality, like Saint Michael and Lucifer.

Among today's politicians, Sen. Barack Obama inspires the same rare kind of devotion. I am not suggesting that this passion is warranted; on the contrary, I think it is, *sub specie aeternitatis*, ridiculous. Obama is a reflexive liberal who was reduced to absurdity last summer by a simple question. He had just delivered a tirade against dogfighting when a member of his audience asked why, if he is a professing Christian, he finds dogfighting more outrageous than legal abortion.

Obama, of course, had no answer to this. Rather desperately, without his typical aplomb, he muttered the usual formulae of his party about women, "choice," and so forth, but he had nothing even slightly illuminating to say about the actual subject: the deliberate killing of innocent human beings before birth.

His duel with Hillary Clinton and her husband came to a head during the annual obsequies for Martin Luther King, Jr., an exercise in vacuous piety I have never been able to understand. King's courage commands my respect, but his words, now quoted like Scripture, are offensive to reason, quite apart from their hypocrisy. I found them irritating long before the sordid sides of his character were revealed. I felt disappointed in Obama when he seemed to assent to King's apotheosis without reservation. It seemed an abdication of his intelligence and a surrender to social pressure.

Still, Obama undeniably has that magical appeal to millions. Why? Much of it is because of his fine racial ambiguity. He is technically "black," in the sense that he has from his Kenyan father an African genetic endowment, but he was reared by his Caucasian mother, and his style and bearing are utterly "white." He has no family history of slavery, segregation, sharecropping, the ghetto, adverse discrimination, and all that. Racial resentment seems entirely alien to him. He attended Harvard Law, for Pete's sake! He seems as reassuring to whites as a "black" man can possibly be.

Obama has become a symbol of the old liberal dream of integration and the color-blind society. He looks black, but sounds white. He dresses immaculately, looks "clean" (as Joe Biden so explosively observed), and has the manners of an Ivy League prof. His skin color is as superficial as liberals have always wanted to insist that race is. If he were your neighbor, you would have no impulse to burn a cross on his lawn, even if you were the grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan.

Not since Colin Powell has a man of African lineage exerted such a powerful tug on the hearts of white Americans. And Powell, too, had no ancestors owned by white masters. That was a key part of his appeal: He was a free man and the son of free men, rather than a victim to whom whites felt they owed groveling apologies.

In the silly squabbles politely miscalled "debates," the Democrats have inanely called for some unspecified "change," never mind from what, or into what, though one assumes that they mean at least relief from George W. Bush, a prospect even most Republicans surely hunger for. We have seen plenty of change since 1861: The original constitutional order of 1789 has been turned into exactly the kind of polity it was supposed to prevent forever, a single "consolidated" state capable of usurping any powers it chose to grab. None of the presidential contenders realizes this, except for the magnificent Ron Paul, whom the others agree is quite irrelevant to the great issues we are said to face in 2008.

Against this background, Bill Clinton chose to assist his wife's presidential campaign by attacking Obama. This appeared a disastrous miscalculation—first, because it seemed an act of weakness (did she need her husband to do her fighting for her?); second, because it confirms the Clintons' reputation as a pair of unscrupulous old political cynics (ganging up on the younger man is unseemly); and third, because it will leave lasting hard feelings among two classes of Democrats (the blacks who have adopted Obama as "one of us" and the romantics who see him as an angel, an Adlai; and after all, it is ill advised to kick Adlai in the groin). On top of all that, the tag-team approach served to elevate the quick-witted Obama, who proved more than capable of taking care of himself.

Besides, the Clintons have become tiresome; and who wants to be hectored by her raucous voice for the next four years? Like so many American women, Hillary is very attentive to her looks, but quite unaware of how grating she sounds. Her election would be punishing to our ears.

But would she be any worse than any of the other hacks who are now begging for our votes? They all agree on the great legacy of centralized power that has supplanted the original plan since the days of Lincoln. It would be as hard to get rid of entitlements now as to restore constitutional government, though it would amount to the same thing. For the foreseeable future, we are to be burdened with what our forebears would know to be tyranny; what difference does it make who administers it? ◈

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The Loss of American Identity

California, Today—Your State, Tomorrow

by Roger D. McGrath

I have never been able to get it through my thick skull that one's identity, culture, and national sovereignty should not stand in the way of making money. For whatever reasons, I have always had a real attachment to my name, my family, my people, my place, my way of life. I have never felt particularly malleable and certainly was never willing to compromise what I am for a dollar. I wish I could say that this comes from a noble choice that I have made—that I would always choose principle over material gain. It is far more elemental than that. I am impelled by atavistic instincts to protect and defend what I am. Because these feelings are so powerful and come from so deep within, I simply marvel at those who, with the carrot of money before them, transform themselves with the facility of a chameleon or accept change with alacrity. I suppose I am destined to live out my days as an unreconstructed American, resisting globalism until I am graveyard dead.

California history offers compelling portraits of Americans who were willing to Hispanicize themselves for profit and those who were unwilling to do anything but fight to remain American. The former were businessmen who came by sea from New England; the latter were frontiersmen who came overland from the Mississippi Valley. I always identified with the latter; so, too, did my friends. We could not help it. Each morning in grammar school, we raised the symbol of those homespun and buckskin-clad frontiersmen who came to California—the Bear Flag. Big Griz on a background of white with a single star and the caption "California Republic" said a lot more to me than profits from shipping hides and tallow to Boston.

The hide-and-tallow traders found it advantageous to become part of Mexican California. They learned and used Spanish, Hispanicized their names, donned California dress, and, to gain citizenship, converted to Roman Catholicism. That last action is especially significant since, at the time, Protestant New England was reacting violently to Catholic immigration. Religious conflict was evidently inconsequential to the hide-and-tallow traders. On the voyage to California, as a saying of the era had it, "they left their conscience at Cape Horn." They also married daughters of the *rancheros*. Some of the daughters were pretty; others were homely. It mattered little. By marrying into the families, the Yankee businessmen guaranteed themselves portions of *ranchos*.

Typical was Abel Stearns, a descendant of Puritan settlers who had arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. Born in 1798, Stearns shipped before the mast when only a boy. He sailed the world before settling in California in 1829. In 1831, he opened a store in Los Angeles and established himself as an importer and exporter. By that time, he had converted to Roman Catholicism and become a Mexican citizen. His business flourished, and, now known as Don Abel, he was elected to the *ayuntamiento* (town council) of Los Angeles. In 1841, he married into the wealthy Bandini family of San Diego. His bride was Arcadia. She was 14; he was 43. Stearns subsequently became one of the largest landowners and cattle ranchers in Southern California, partly because of his business acumen and partly because of his family connections.

Americans of a different nature were settling during the 1840's in the Sacramento and other interior valleys of California. They arrived not by sea but by overland treks. They were interested in hunting, trapping, and farming rather than commerce. They avoided Mexican Californians and constituted a group apart. Clad in buckskin with Bowie knives stuck in their belts, and carrying Kentucky and Hawken rifles, they had come to extend the American frontier into California. Red-haired, Kentucky-born Ben Kelsey was representative of these frontiersmen. He and his 18-year-old Kentucky-born wife, Nancy, had arrived in California with the Bidwell Party in 1841 after 2,000 miles on the trail from Missouri. Nancy and her 18-month-old daughter were the only females who made the final leg of the journey from southern Idaho through northern Nevada and across the Sierra. By then, Nancy's shoes had worn away, and she crossed California's great granite range barefoot, while carrying her daughter. She was also five-months pregnant. Both husband and wife were rugged frontiersmen who never thought of turning back. "Where my husband goes," said Nancy, "I go. I can better endure the hardships of the journey than the anxieties of an absent husband."

Once in California, Kelsey made a living hunting and trapping. By 1845, Kelsey had built a log cabin and staked a homestead at the upper end of the Napa Valley. When American settlers revolted against Mexican rule, Ben Kelsey and his brothers were among the first participants. On June 14, 1846, Kelsey and other American frontiers-

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Corresponding editor Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

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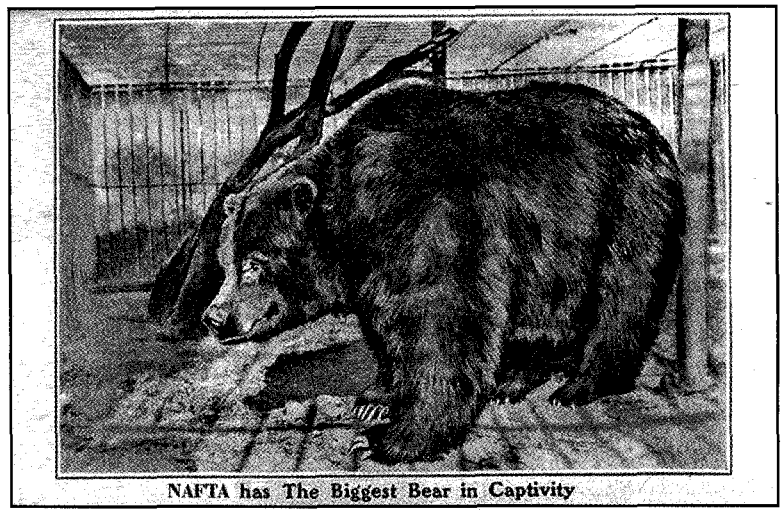
men took control of Sonoma and raised the Bear Flag. Holding her two-month-old son, Andrew, Nancy Kelsey proudly watched the grizzly banner flap in the breeze. She was the one who had made it, using cloth from her own petticoats. Described at this time as "a fine-looking woman," she became known as the Betsy Ross of California. Ben later got into a dispute with John C. Frémont, who had belatedly assumed command of the Bear Flaggers. Typical of American frontiersmen, Kelsey loudly protested Frémont's imperious manner. "The Kelseys were well known for their use of wicked and blasphemous language," Nancy later told an interviewer, "—made a mule-skinner blush!"

As a child growing up in California and learning of our pioneer settlers, the story of the Kelseys always resonated with me more than that of Abel Stearns. The Kelseys, and other frontiersmen who followed, brought America with them. Stearns brought a shrewd Yankee business acumen. He was determined to make money, even if it meant changing his language, religion, and nationality. He would welcome the globalism of today.

In 1992, Strobe Talbott, a journalist with *Time*, declared in "The Birth of the Global Nation" that, within a century, "nationhood as we know it will be obsolete; all states will recognize a single, global authority. A phrase briefly fashionable in the mid-20th century—'citizen of the world'—will have assumed real meaning by the end of the 21st century." Friends with Bill Clinton since their days together as Rhodes Scholars, Talbott served as deputy secretary of state from 1994 to 2001. It was in 1994 that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was implemented. A significant step toward the globalization of America and the loss of national sovereignty, NAFTA was supported by our business elites, who have gone one step further than Abel Stearns. Instead of Hispanicizing themselves for profit and gain, their policies are causing the Hispanicization of America. The business elites are unaffected by the changes. They live on estate properties on private roads or in gated communities. Their children attend private schools. They and their families fly on their own corporate jets. They belong to exclusive country clubs. While they wine and dine, America loses her identity—but the price is right.

NAFTA was supposed to boost the economies of both the United States and Mexico. Although the factory farms of agribusiness have benefited, the small farms in America have continued to lose ground, and more than 50,000 of them have gone under. Family farmers should be put on the endangered-species list. Ma and Pa Kettle are nearly extinct. The same is true south of the border. On January 1, 2008, the last of the trade barriers on the importation of corn, beans, sugar, and milk into Mexico were erased. NAFTA is now fully implemented. Small farmers in Mexico fear the worst. Protesting farmers have appeared at border crossings. On New Year's Day at Juárez, a hundred of them blocked traffic lanes entering Mexico and inspected trucks for farm goods. They know that they cannot compete with America's factory farms.

Mexican imports of corn from the United States have risen from fewer than one million metric tons in 1993 to nearly ten million metric tons in 2006-07.



NAFTA has The Biggest Bear in Captivity

Melanie Anderson

Mexicans have been knocked off their farms by the tens of thousands during the last 15 years. And where are they going? Some have moved to Mexico City, which now has a population of more than 22 million and is among the most crowded and polluted cities in the world; and millions have entered the United States, where good wages, free public education, free medical care at emergency rooms and in maternity wards, citizenship for their U.S.-born children, food stamps, AFDC, and subsidized housing make them lottery winners. The American taxpayer supports all this, while employers of illegal labor benefit. People think that illegal aliens earn eight or nine dollars per hour. That is only what they cost their employer. Their educational, medical, and welfare benefits mean they really make the equivalent of 20 or more dollars per hour. The American taxpayer is making up the difference—subsidizing the businesses that employ the illegal aliens. What a deal.

Parts of America are beginning to look and act more like Mexico than like the United States. In Los Angeles, the celebration of the Fourth of July is now rivaled by Cinco de Mayo. Also rapidly gaining popularity is the Dia de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead. These holidays, and others, are continually promoted by the Spanish-language radio stations of Los Angeles, which, according to Arbitron Ratings, rank first, fourth, sixth, ninth, twelfth, and fourteenth among L.A.'s top-fifteen stations. Today, there are 16 Spanish-language radio stations in Los Angeles—14 more than there were in the 1970's. When I was in school in Southern California during the 50's and early 60's, we listened to Bill Ballance on KFWB spin rock 'n' roll 45's and entertain us with a quick wit, a sesquipedalian vocabulary, and cleverly crafted English. The closest Spanish-language station was 150 miles away, across the border in Tijuana, and couldn't be heard, except at night, any farther north than San Diego.

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I have watched my friends and relatives move out of state, to Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Montana, and, especially, to the panhandle of Idaho. They are representative of one of the greatest internal migrations of native-born Americans in history. For the last several years, far more Americans have moved out of California than into the state. Last year, 263,000 citizens left the once Golden State—and a similar out-migration has been going on, with a few anomalous blips, for the last 15 years. Yet California's population continues to grow, as a result of both legal and illegal immigration. Nearly 30 percent of California residents are now foreign born; a stunning five million of them were born in Mexico. Among California's large cities, Santa Ana—Orange County's most populous town, whose residents were more than 80-percent white and native born from its founding in 1886 through the 1950's—leads the way with 50 percent foreign born and 88 percent nonwhite. Los Angeles is not far behind, with 42 percent foreign born and 72 percent nonwhite. The majority of the foreign born are illegal aliens from Mexico, although there are large numbers from Central America as well, especially from El Salvador. Between 2001 and 2006, the population of Los Angeles County grew by one million people, despite tens of thousands of native-born Americans moving out of the county.

I am impelled by atavistic instincts to protect and defend what I am. Because these feelings are so powerful and come from so deep within, I simply marvel at those who, with the carrot of money before them, transform themselves with the facility of a chameleon or accept change with alacrity.

Los Angeles schools reveal what the future holds. For most grammar-school students in the city of Los Angeles, English is a second language. For some, it is a third language, behind one of several Indian tongues of Mexico and Spanish. Hispanics now make up 75 percent of the students; whites, a mere 7 percent. When I was in high school, those numbers were nearly reversed. Twenty-six of the city's high schools are now 80-percent or more Hispanic. Eighteen of those have student bodies that are 90-percent or more Hispanic, and seven are 98- or 99-percent. The ethnic cleansing is nearly complete.

My brother and sister graduated from University High School during the 1950's. The school then was about 85-percent white and less than 10-percent Hispanic. Now it is 57-percent Hispanic and 11-percent white. When I graduated from newly built Palisades High, on the far-western fringe of the city and only a half-mile from the surf, it was 99-percent white. Now, it is 48-percent white and 25-percent Hispanic. In the 1950's and 60's, Fairfax High was known as the city's kosher high school—its student body was some 90-percent Jewish. Today, Fairfax is more than 50-percent Hispanic and only 7-percent white. There are no statistics on how many of that 7 percent are Jewish, but the proliferation of private Jewish schools in the area would suggest very few. Palisades at the beach and El Camino, Granada Hills, and Grant in the San Fernando Valley are the only high schools in the city where white students number more than 30 percent.

Americans generally have a misconception about California, thinking that a Mexican presence was significant throughout the state's history. Actually, from 1850 until the late 1960's, the Mexican population was never more than four or five percent of the total. Hispanics, mostly Mexican born or of Mexican descent, now make up 37 percent of California's population. This dramatic demographic shift began only about 40 years ago, and most of it has occurred only during the last two decades. The results of this foreign invasion—and it is nothing less—have been a boon to employers of unskilled and semiskilled labor and a disaster for California taxpayers and for Californians who have lost their jobs or seen their wages stagnate or decline because of the arrival of millions of illegal aliens.

California is near the breaking point. The state is facing a $14 billion shortfall in this year's budget—and most of that budget goes for schools and welfare. Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich says that illegal aliens cost the county $440 million per year in food stamps and welfare for children alone. He estimates that including the costs of illegal aliens to the schools and criminal-justice system would push the total to three billion dollars per year. We can no longer afford to educate and support Mexico's poor—or police criminal illegal aliens.

Nonetheless, it seems more integration with Mexico is on the way. In March 2005, President Bush and the leaders of Canada and Mexico signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP), thought by many to be a prelude to a North American Union. Think of the SPP as NAFTA on steroids. The business elites and globalists, generally one and the same, are drooling. Anyone who respects the Constitution and has an instinctual sense of American identity should be alarmed: A decade of the SPP will make a North American Union a *fait accompli*. Such a union will mean the elimination of our border with Mexico, the building of a superhighway and commerce corridors from Mexico to Canada, and even, perhaps, the adoption of a common currency. It will also mean the Hispanicization of most of the Southwest, something that is already well under way in California. Perhaps the costs of absorbing Mexico's surplus population will cause the policy of integration to collapse. Or, perhaps, Americans just might be roused to righteous anger over the transformation of our society and the loss of our identity. The Bear Flaggers had no doubt about their identity, and the symbol they chose was emblematic of "strength, ferocity, and standing fast." We could do worse than follow their example.

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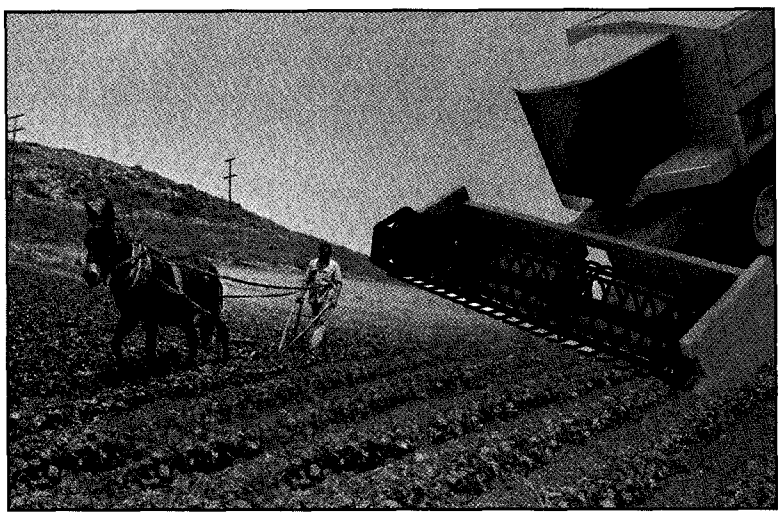
The Tragedy of Mexico

Riches Unrealized

by Gregory McNamee



Melanie Anderson

Twenty-eight years ago, in the summer of 1980, I moved to Guadalajara, Mexico, to take a job teaching English and journalism at a university there. The job ended just as soon as it began: On the first day of classes, the university, a private institution with connections to the country's thriving neofascist movement and, thence, to the central government, closed to protest the city government's having named a nearby street in honor of the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, a self-professed communist then seven-years dead. When an administrator came around asking that I sign an oath of allegiance to the university, I refused, explaining that my country's constitution forbade such inscriptions. The look on his face suggested that I was right to pack my books and leave at once, and so I did.

Now jobless, I walked several miles back to the small farm where I had found an apartment to rent and told the proprietor that it might have to become available once again. I was unhappy, not least because it was a lovely place, a huge, airy *L*-shaped suite of rooms on the second floor above a granary, its wide terrace overhung by half a dozen avocado trees available for the plucking whenever I wished, and it was cheap, $100 per month, about $250 in today's dollars. I explained the day's events and my newly unemployed status.

"Don't worry," said the farmer. "We'll find a job for you. Besides, Mexico is a great country to be poor in. Look at those avocados. There's food everywhere around here. Look, those oranges and limes are falling into the street; you just need to pick them up. It's not ever very cold, so you don't need many clothes. You can always trade English lessons for a chicken."

He did find me a job: shooting rats off the tall stone walls surrounding the farmyard. I didn't have to give lessons for my meals in the manner of a Jane Austen novel, but, instead, was soon hired at a high school to teach English to the children of wealthy Mexicans and Europeans. The former wanted, it seemed to me, only to become Americans, or at least American consumers; on the weekends, as I sipped beer and gunned down football-sized rats, they jetted up to Los Angeles or Houston to shop.

I took pains to remind them that they, as the children of privilege, would be called upon to rule one day and might do well to cultivate an interest in their own country. I brought in copies of the dissident poet Octavio Paz's magazine *Vuelta*, a cousin of *Libération* in Paris and *Corriere della Sera* in Milan, written by some of the smartest and independently minded journalists and intellectuals in the country; leftists accused it of being rightist, and rightists, of being leftist, which suggested to me that someone was doing something right. The students smiled politely when I asked them to debate the merits of, say, Enrique Krauze's proposal to privatize the state-owned oil company or to discuss Elena Poniatowska's groundbreaking investigative reports on the 1968 massacre of student protestors in Mexico City, but the bright lights of Century City held more sway. In all events, Pink Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall (Part II)" was the top hit of the hour, and when I pressed a point, the answer that came back, in gently

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Gregory McNamee writes from Tucson, Arizona. He is the author, most recently, of Moveable Feasts *(Praeger, 2006).*

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accented English, was all too often "Ay, teassher, leave us kids alone."

The farmer was right. Mexico was an easy country to be poor in. Paid $600 per month, I was close to being a rich man in the little farm town I lived in, since swallowed up by Guadalajara, which mushroomed from a million inhabitants in 1980 to five or six times that number today. The farmers were not so bad off themselves. So I thought, at least, when the government decreed one October morning that the prices of tortillas and beans, staples of the Mexican diet, would double overnight. But the smallholders of Las Fuentes saw none of that hike, which consumers immediately felt. The federal government in Mexico City, the sole commander of the country's command economy, pocketed the difference, in preparation, back in those days when the oxymoronically named Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) ruled uncontested, for a change of presidents two years down the road. The custom was for the departing president to loot the treasury before handing the keys to office over to his handpicked successor, handpicked so that there would be no investigation into the looting. The tradition seems to have outlasted the PRI: It is reported that Vicente Fox, who left office last year, remodeled his Guanajuato ranch to the tune of several million public dollars—a pittance compared with the billions that the Harvard-educated, neoliberal Carlos Salinas de Gortari is said to have smuggled out of the country on leaving office in 1994, just after having signed off on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that would impoverish his country even further.

Government fiats have always made Mexico less easy to be poor in, as have the rapacious habits of Mexico's rulers, a pattern established by the conquistador Hernán Cortés and repeated ever since. One of the great tragedies of Mexican history, repeated for nearly 500 years, is this: Mexico is unusually rich in natural resources of many kinds, including oil and, in much of the country, water. Her soil is fertile, her climate moderate. Her geography has allowed for great ranches in the north, vast farms in the south, and some of the New World's most important seaports on either coast.

And yet Mexico is poor. Or, at any rate, most of her people are poor.

P. Lamartine Yates, a British-born agricultural economist long resident in Mexico, whose work I would edit not long after returning to the United States, likened the country to China: ruled by a monolithic single party that, regardless of what it called itself, practiced a form of corporate fascism and that took care of its inner circle—the party faithful, the praetorian guard, the residents of the capital, the residents of provincial capitals, and then the rest of the populace, in that order. Certainly, Mexico's command economy functions so, even in the supposedly free market of today: Go into a restaurant in Sonora, where the best beef in Mexico is produced in abundance, and you will often be told that there is no beef to be had, for all of it has been shipped off to Mexico City, just as the best tea in Hangzhou goes off to Beijing.

Other scholars of Mexico, in the wake of the end of one-party rule, have likened the country, instead, to India, which, for all her manifold problems, functions somewhat better in many ways. Indeed, Octavio Paz, at one time Mexico's ambassador to India, suggested that India ran more efficiently because she had been colonized by England, which built roads, railroads, telegraphs, hospitals, and schools, while Mexico was a colony of Spain at a particularly unfortunate time, when the order of the day was to cart off as much silver, gold, copper, and other wealth as could be stuffed into a galleon, in the meanwhile imposing all sorts of arcane rules by which the colony was constrained from competing with the motherland. To name just one example, until Spanish rule ended in 1821, growers in fertile Mexico were forbidden to plant olive orchards or vineyards, olive oil and wine from Spain being lucrative, crown-controlled luxuries subject to still more lucrative tariffs on being shipped across the waters.

Like China and India, Mexico was once a nation with a vast rural population, one that greatly outnumbered the residents of the cities, most of which were really only large towns. That ratio began slowly to shift in the early 1940's, when the government of Miguel Alemán inaugurated a series of nationalization measures that brought the country's oil industry under government control and expropriated millions of hectares of land that, in theory, were to be redistributed to the poor. They were, but, rather than be allotted to individual farmers, the backbone of Mexico's agricultural economy, the newly public holdings were organized as collectives called *ejidos* and administered with all the care of their cousins in the Soviet Union and China. *Ejidatarios* soon found themselves without much incentive to work, since the fruits of their labor were taken off by government functionaries, minor heirs of the *caudillos* of colonial times. Most of the *ejidos* had collapsed by the 1960's, the farmers who worked them preferring to take their chances elsewhere. Millions began to move from the countryside into towns and cities; by 1980, according to some estimates, Mexico City and the high valley in which the conurbation sits had nearly 25 million residents, only half of them recorded by census.

In the meanwhile, millions more were moving northward, a migration that began, if slowly at first, with the decline of the *ejidos* in northern border states such as Baja California and Tamaulipas and that accelerated throughout the 1980's and early 90's. The passage of NAFTA, which favored corporate farming over smallholders, displaced still more rural Mexicans from the land. More went to the cities; more went north, now by the millions. The rise of the media-savvy Zapatista revolutionary movement a decade ago coincided with this massive demographic shift, which left many lush southern Mexican rural districts nearly *despoblado*, depopulated, as the conquistadors once described the northern deserts; Subcomandante Marcos may have been a pipe-smoking philosophy

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major from the capital, but he was also an astute critic of a supposed free-trade agreement that would make the poor even poorer while putting still more money into the hands of Mexico's tiny ruling class, as NAFTA surely has.

The tragedy of Mexico, as Boris Pasternak said of Russia, is in the end her accursed capacity for suffering: With a few exceptions, her people have allowed themselves to be robbed, exploited, expropriated, misled, and misgoverned for generation after generation. Mexico, of course, is not alone; the same might be said of our own country, if one were to put a sharp point on it. But, as Octavio Paz pondered in his still-essential *Labyrinth of Solitude*, Mexico's capacity is deepened by a unique brand of fatalism, one that seems to accept without complaint—but with plenty of jokes and ballads—the fact that the people are lambs, and the rulers and their circle, wolves, and that this is not just the way things are but the way things must be.

There is another proposition hidden in that fatalism, and that is the idea that it is better to shrug one's shoulders and leave rather than stand one's ground and fight. Subcomandante Marcos's calls to arms notwithstanding, the rural dispossessed of Mexico have long looked to the north as a place of refuge and possibility, and it is to the north that they have gone. Just so, their dispossessors have long looked to the United States as a sort of pressure-release valve for social tensions, as a dumping ground for unwanted *campesinos* and excess urban labor; when times are hard, it has proved expedient for the privileged to let the landless and jobless head north to look for work landscaping in Los Angeles or washing dishes in Boston, remitting paychecks home, a good deal for all concerned except for the workers, most of whom surely would have preferred to stay put.

The tragedy of Mexico is that a political and economic system that reflects the people's industriousness and capacity for thoughtful, careful work—look to any one of countless indigenous arts and shade-tree labors, from silversmithing to auto repair to music to cooking, for examples—has never been put into place. Properly channeled, the energies of the nation's people, and notably of those of her people who have had to leave to work elsewhere, could make of Mexico an economic powerhouse of international significance. Properly channeled, those energies would make Guadalajara a city to rival Barcelona, the Federal District a New World rejoinder to Shanghai, Tokyo, or even London.

Poor Mexico, said onetime ruler Porfirio Diaz a century ago—so far from God and so close to the United States. The tragedy of Mexico is that she is not rich, though she should be, and that she does not lead, though she should do so. The tragedy is that she is not free, least of all her market. The tragedy is that, having suffered so much for so long, she patiently awaits more suffering. But the greatest tragedy is that, as with so much of the world, her body lies not so close to the United States, but so far from her soul. ◁©▷

Passage: After Seeing a Photograph of the Himalayas

by Stella Nesanovich

Ridges of blue companions to clouds,
Mountains smoked with white mists,
Juxtaposition of earth and thin body:
Transient flesh prey to gravity's pull.

In the photograph of Posang Pass, against
The foothills of the world's highest places,
My friend is dwarfed and changed.

How did she come to this passage?
What prayers did she offer this morning,
What blessings request for the day's trek?

Though my journey was pilgrimage
Played on local stages, I too heard the soul's
Voice, learned its language and call.

Still, the small figure beckons from
Mysteries older than language,
Rising before we named them
Annapurna, Chomolungma, Himal Ganesh.

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Immigration and the American Future

IMMIGRATION AND THE American FUTURE

EDITED BY CHILTON WILLIAMSON, JR.

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Family Gathering

by Stella Nesanovich

Julian of Norwich, age 8, 1350

I joke with my brothers and sisters,
"We are a wool-gathering family."
They smile while shearing our sheep.
We are blessed, I say, lest they think

I complain and fret. The rivers Yare
And Wensum give us fish to trade at market,
Blocks of herrings to choose for supper,
And these small beasts to keep us in clothing.

We sleep not on straw but soft-spun wool.
Now I am to travel to Carrow Abbey,
Where the nuns will continue my study
Of Latin and the saints, as I pleaded,

Tugging so often on father's sleeve.
Surely I was a nuisance. Yet my eagerness
Will yield to penance on a bed of rough husks,
And I will miss the scent of lanolin

On my fingers, the matted curls of sheep.
No black snouts and buff faces to greet
On strolls, nor kindly eyes to mirror
The humble Lamb, our Lord and Savior.

"God is our clothing," Friar John has said.
"He wraps about us like a cloak, clasps
And encloses us in His mantle"—
A pledge of love for all of His sheep.

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Facts? Who Needs 'Em!

Some Critical Thinking in Texas

by William Lutz

In 2006, lawmakers in the Lone Star State were horrified that a large percentage of Texas high-school graduates required remedial courses to gain the skills needed to succeed in college. So they directed the commissioner of higher education and the commissioner of education to assemble teams of college and high-school faculty to recommend changes to the state curriculum that would incorporate college-readiness skills.

They made one costly mistake, however: They let the education bureaucracy run the process. It should come as no surprise, then, that the first draft of the standards proposed by the social-studies "Vertical Teams" on October 25, 2007, does not require students to know much of anything about American or Western civilization. It does, however, expect students to understand and regurgitate the prevailing ideology found at most American universities.

"The Vertical Teams (VTs) chose deliberately not to identify lists of facts that students must master to be ready for college," reads the introduction to the proposed social-studies college-readiness standards:

> This should not be interpreted to mean that students should not be mastering a range of specific information about social systems and phenomena. Instead, the standards assume that students will utilize their understanding of events, social systems, and human behavior to develop greater insight into how the various parts fit together into a more unified whole and into how seemingly contradictory explanations or points of view can be analyzed for greater understanding instead of simply taking sides.

Completely absent from the social-studies standards is any discussion of Ronald Reagan, Adam Smith, the causes of the American Revolution, the fall of the Soviet Union and its causes, the development of English common law, the Magna Carta, or the *Federalist*. The Declaration of Independence is mentioned once, when students are invited to "Analyze the Declaration of Independence from the perspective of men and women, and people of Native American, European, and African descent."

Where it addresses the importance of diversity and multiculturalism, however, the document is very specific. Students are expected to "Identify the different racial and ethnic classifications used by the U.S. Census Bureau," "Describe and list several examples of Latino contributions to U.S. popular culture since 1980," and "Assess how concepts of ethnicity have been used to allow one group to dominate another."

Immigration, a topic that is on the minds of myriad citizens of the Lone Star State, is mentioned in this document. Students are invited to "Provide a [*sic*] historical perspective of xenophobia and its impact on immigration policies in the United States."

In tackling the topic of homosexuality, the standards direct students to "Analyze how various Supreme Court decisions or federal government initiatives have shaped individual or group identities over time (e.g., *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, *Lawrence* v. *Texas*)." Of course, in the last example, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the Texas law banning homosexual sodomy to be unconstitutional. Students are also directed to "Identify examples of how gender [*sic*] is socially constructed."

What's scary about these standards is that they probably do reflect what a substantial portion, if not a majority, of the social-science faculties of America's universities expects arriving students to know (or believe). More and more schools are little concerned about teaching concrete facts and are placing great emphasis on the study of vague "processes" and broad pronouncements condemning the "racist" history of America.

Standing in the way of the leftists is the elected State Board of Education. The education bureaucracy has often tried to abolish this board or strip it of its powers (usually quietly at the end of legislative sessions), but, as it stands, the board still has power over the curriculum.

The original version of the bill calling for the curriculum rewrite turned the entire process over to liberal academics and high-school teachers. When the State Board of Education and conservative Texans raised strong objections, the legislature rewrote the legislation to give the elected board the final say.

So far, conservatives on the board are not impressed

William Lutz is the editor of the Lone Star Report.

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with the work of the Vertical Teams. "Any history standards document that substitutes pillars such as the U.S. Constitution and The Magna Carta for air-headed multiculturalism diversity mush should be deposited in the nearest trash bin," said Republican State Board of Education member Terri Leo of Houston. "The draft is so awful that I call upon the commissioner to start completely over or face clear opposition from this member when the draft reaches the State Board of Education."

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which must approve the standards before they are submitted to the State Board of Education, was scheduled to review them in January. And several major conservative organizations drafted numerous objections during the allotted public-comment period.

Supporters of the Vertical Teams' draft claim that the new p.c. standards were included not as required parts of the state's social-studies curriculum but as examples of how schools could comply with the broader standards outlined in the document, which require students to "Evaluate sources from multiple perspectives," "Understand the concept of ethnicity," and "Evaluate to what extent a society is multicultural."

There are two problems with this claim. First, under Texas law, everything that is written into the state curriculum—even examples—must be used to evaluate school textbooks. (The state approves textbooks and tells districts which portions of the curriculum standards they satisfy.) And any of these examples may appear on the state's standardized tests.

Second, the vast majority of the examples are critical of Western civilization and traditional values. If the authors were simply interested in helping students "evaluate sources from multiple perspectives," they could have offered an example such as this: "Compare and contrast Edmund Burke's views on the French Revolution with those of Thomas Paine." Of course, such an example might cause a high-school student to understand, and therefore appreciate, something of the tradition that gave birth to our system of government—which obviously isn't the goal of the Texas educrats.

The education bureaucracy's leftist game plan—downplay facts, push multiculturalism, blast Western civilization—is nothing new. What is new—and encouraging—is that the power players in Texas education are beginning to stand up to the education bureaucracy.

Beginning in 1995 and stretching forward into 2001, every action taken in Texas government was viewed through the prism of the George W. Bush presidential campaign. Governor Bush wanted to be viewed by the national press as "pro-education," so many educational fads were adorned with conservative rhetoric and became official policy. The State Board of Education was attacked and ridiculed by Bush and his lieutenants, but the effort to abolish the board failed.

Things are different in Texas now that the presidential parade has passed us by. The State Board of Education got near-universal support from Texas Republicans when it rejected an environmental-science textbook that bashed business and was full of environmental-activist propaganda.

More recently, the board rejected *Everyday Math*, a textbook used in elementary-school classrooms across the country. Its basic premise is that exposing students to "mathematical ideas" is more important than teaching them how to perform such operations as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division through traditional means (borrowing, carrying, long division, *etc.*). The book calls for *third graders* to use calculators in math class. This violates state standards, which, for example, require students to "learn and apply multiplication facts through 12 by 12 using concrete models and objects."

In today's educational theory facts are irrelevant. Students need only to practice and learn "critical-thinking skills." But attempting to teach children "critical-thinking skills" without first teaching them concrete facts is like asking someone who doesn't know a trombone from a bassoon to critique a symphony. In the end, the student only learns to parrot the teacher's (or the state's) opinion (or propaganda). On the other hand, when children learn basic facts, they have a foundation on which to build real "critical-thinking skills"—which may lead to intelligent criticism of the prevailing worldview of the school system. Perhaps that is why today's educrats shy away from teaching facts.

In rejecting *Everyday Mathematics*, the board sent a message to publishers nationwide: "Fuzzy math" is not welcome in Texas. In fact, we care more about our children's ability to *do* math than about whether they like it.

In today's educational theory—exemplified by the proposed social-studies standards and by *Everyday Mathematics*—facts are irrelevant. Students need only to practice and learn "critical-thinking skills." But attempting to teach children "critical-thinking skills" without first teaching them concrete facts is like asking someone who doesn't know a trombone from a bassoon to critique a symphony. In the end, the student only learns to parrot the teacher's (or the state's) opinion (or propaganda).

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by Taki Theodoracopulos

Scuppering the Serbs

I live in New York and London, and among the gruesome sights I've had to endure these last few years has been the sight of a vainglorious James Rubin, of Madeleine Albright fame, prancing about the hot spots of these multicultural havens for the rich and infamous. Rubin is married to Christiane Amanpour, the CNN hussy who takes herself almost as seriously as her hubby takes himself. I first spotted Rubin holding court at one of Conrad Black's London garden parties, when the Blacks were still throwing parties. A few Paris Hilton wannabees were hanging on his every word. Had it been Gen. George Patton, I would have understood the pose. But Rubin?

It got worse when Rubin oiled his way into a group of close friends of mine, and I had the bad luck to be seated at the same table as his pomposousness. To say that we disagreed would be a gross understatement. No insults were exchanged, but I did tell him in no uncertain terms that he could sling his bull in D.C., but that I was an old *putana* who could spot a phoney social climber a mile away. We never saw each other again—in fact, it took very little time for my friends to drop him like the proverbial hot potato—but now I read that he's moving to New York in anticipation of a call from State or the White House, once Queen Hillary is restored to her throne.

What was even more striking than Rubin's arrogance and self-importance was how little he knew about the bad old world out there. Sure, he could spout the usual bromides he had learned sitting on Madeleine's knees, but it was all political sloganeering and slide-slipping; the man is a flack, nothing more. The "on dit" among the chattering classes in London is that his marriage is a perfect one because both parties prefer their own sex. If true, it's beside the point. Now that "gay marriage" is "*le gout du jour*," who am I, a poor little Greek boy, to take exception to marriages of convenience?

My beef with Rubin at dinner was, of course, the bombing of Serbia. Before I go on, however, one more vignette of the gruesome sights I've been enduring of late. Richard Holbrooke (not the name he was born with, but Christianized along the way) is another man with blood on his hands—Greek Orthodox blood, I may add. He is the Talleyrand who forged the Rambouillet "peace accords," which offered the drug-dealing KLA *de facto* independence from Serbia. The fact that the KLA had been designated a terrorist organization did not bother old Holbrooke, a man who fancies himself a Don Juan, having run off with the late Peter Jennings's wife Kati, a Hungarian woman known for her flirtatious nature. (Her children with Peter and mine were in kindergarten together—it is now called preschool by those who believe everything German stinks. And when I say she's flirty, I mean she's very flirty.)

The one and only time I met with the Jewish Talleyrand was at an Italian tycoon's house (where else?) in New York. Gianni Agnelli had Holbrooke, the duke of Beaufort, Pamela Harriman, and little old me for lunch. Compared with James Rubin, Holbrooke was self-effacing and downright humble. He spoke mostly of the root of all envy—money, that is. To be fair, this was a long time ago, and he was then employed by one of those Wall Street behemoths who pay Holbrooke-types millions while they're out of power in order to have the inside track once the Holbrooke-types get back in. Unlike Rubin, he did not disguise his emptiness with impudence. In fact, he was quite likeable.

I consider myself fortunate never to have met the grotesque Albright or Baron Munchhausen, a.k.a. Bill Clinton. Together with Rubin and Holbrooke, they managed to achieve the following: Serbian lands are occupied by foreign armies; the crime rate in Kosovo is horrific; slavery, drugs, intimidation, assault, and smuggling are the norm. The Albanian mafia and Islamic jihadists fuel the black market. Kosovo Force troops and E.U. dignitaries look the other way while the KLA is rewarded for bad behavior. On March 24, 1999, NATO began dropping bombs on Serbia in order to force her army to leave Kosovo, the holiest of places for Serbs. Over 200,000 Serbs, Roma, and non-Albanians had to flee once Serbia yielded. The KLA was guilty of crimes against Serbs long before the war, yet it was the coke-dealing Hashim Thaci whom Madeleine Albright turned to as an ally. In February 1999, Western diplomats nearly agreed to a deal with Milosevic at Rambouillet that would have led to a semi-autonomous Kosovo. Only an unreasonable insistence by the West (Blair and Holbrooke) that NATO troops should be allowed to roam about Serbia at will, and that there would be a referendum on independence for Kosovo within three years, scuppered the deal.

It is obvious to those who know how Anglo-American governments act against weak opponents that London and Washington were spoiling for a fight. Blair, Clinton, Albright, and Holbrooke were calling for a "new internationalism" that would not tolerate dictators. (They seemed to have forgotten Africa.) Three years later, it was Saddam's turn, and we all know how that one turned out. Americans should wake up to what is really going on in Kosovo and put a stop to Washington's shenanigans in the Balkans once and for all. I won't be holding my breath.

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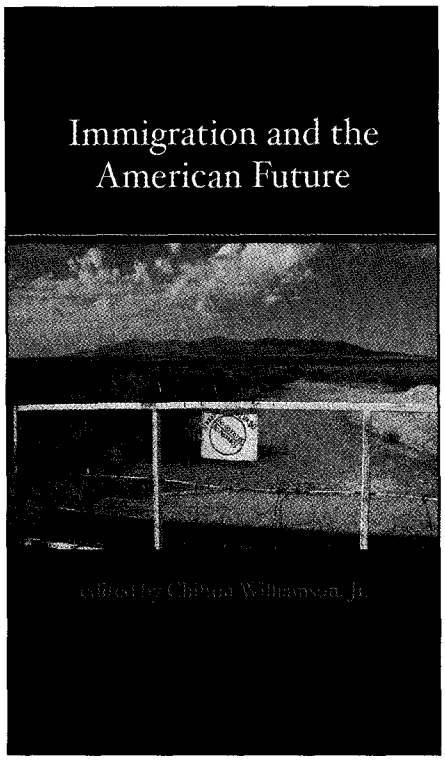
After the Deluge

by Jack Trotter

"Who would call in a / foreigner—unless / an artisan with skill to / serve the realm, / a healer, or a prophet, or / a builder, / or one whose harp and song / might give us joy. / . . . but when have beggars come by / invitation?"

—Homer

Immigration and the American Future
Chilton Williamson, Jr., ed.
Rockford, IL: Chronicles Press; 307 pp., $29.95



Melanie Anderson

It should be obvious to anyone who has taken the slightest trouble to examine the immigration question that America is faced not with an immigration "problem," or even a "crisis," but with a massive demographic invasion that, if not soon addressed by radical means, will permanently alter the nation's social, economic, political, and cultural landscape. Currently, nearly 40 million Americans are of "foreign-born" stock. Of these, more than 50 percent are Latin Americans (over 30 percent Mexican). Current projections show that, by 2025, non-Hispanic whites will be a minority in at least nine states; by 2050, this number will have increased to 16 states.

Only once before in our history has the percentage of foreign-born stock been higher, and that was in the decade before 1920, when it was just under 15 percent. We are likely to surpass that figure within a few years. Moreover, immigration today differs in kind from that great wave which preceded the Immigration Act of 1924. As Samuel Huntington and Pat Buchanan, among others, have taken pains to demonstrate, never before has the immigrant population been so overrepresented by a single ethnicity, nor has the integrity of our national borders been threatened. In addition, thanks to the priority given to family reunification in the Immigration Act of 1965, the United States is now besieged with new immigrants who have little to offer the nation other than their poverty and their willingness to do grunt labor for the predatory capitalists who are the primary beneficiaries of the naive or cynical politicians who have underwritten this national-suicide scenario.

In *Immigration and the American Future*, Chilton Williamson has compiled 13 essays and one interview that cover what he describes as "the total effect of mass immigration in its various aspects," ranging from immigration's impact on national security, its economic consequences, and its political ramifications to its cultural and environmental transformations, as well as its ethical challenges. All of the essays were commissioned specifically for this book, though shorter versions of two of them appeared earlier in *Chronicles*. And while there is certainly a diversity of perspective, the collection does not pretend to debate the fundamental question. To a greater or lesser degree, all the authors concur that present levels of immigration are unsustainable and that they imperil our national future. Of course, after years of being ignored by the political and media mainstream, the immigration threat has recently become an approved subject for discussion. However, the contributors to this volume are not johnny-come-latelies. Most have written extensively on immigration for a decade or more.

One of the great myths of the immigration debate is that immigrants continue to be an asset to an ever-expanding U.S. economy. They take jobs that Americans are unwilling to do; they pay taxes; they broaden the consumer base; and they bring skills that are sometimes in short supply. The problem with these popular assumptions is that they are either wholly false or merely half-truths which require a good deal of qualification. Several of the contributors to the present vol-

Jack Trotter writes from Charleston, South Carolina.

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ume challenge such assumptions. For instance, are immigrants really an asset to the economy because they take jobs that shiftless (so it is implied) Americans are no longer willing to do? As Edwin S. Rubenstein argues ("Immigrants in America: A Statistical Overview"), "nothing could be further from the truth." Examining the job displacement of American workers by illegals, Rubenstein notes that unemployment rates among U.S.-born workers are highest in precisely those occupations that have the greatest concentrations of illegal workers—construction trades, domestic service, landscaping. To take just one example, the unemployment rate among construction laborers was, as of 2004, 13 percent, tripling the national unemployment average. Are native-born workers abandoning these jobs because they no longer wish to engage in "menial labor"? In fact, they have not abandoned these jobs at all. They are simply laid off and replaced with illegals or recently naturalized workers (Hispanic, more often than not) who will work for much less. David Hartman ("The Economics of Illegal Immigration to the United States"), whose Hartman Foundation funded this volume, provides the most telling number: In the construction trades, between 1972 and 2005, average hourly and weekly earnings dropped by 21.6 percent. Is it a coincidence that, during the same period, the number of immigrants (both legal and illegal) from Mexico alone rose by more than 350 percent?

Defenders of "amnesty" and of present levels of legal immigration argue that, as long as unemployment rates nationwide remain low, all is well. As for those workers who are displaced, it is often suggested, they should take advantage of the opportunity to obtain retraining in some skilled or semi-skilled occupation where the compensation is sufficient for their needs. This is cold comfort for those with hungry mouths to feed at home. In the first place, even with retraining, the competition workers face for good jobs is increasingly fierce. Many thousands of high-paying manufacturing jobs have simply gone overseas (or across the border), while others have been eliminated as a result of the flood of cheap imported goods entering American markets. In those manufacturing industries that remain, wages have been steadily declining. Drawing on U.S. Department of Labor statistics, Hartman shows that, since 1972, the "average real compensation per unit of output" in the manufacturing sector has plummeted by half. He is careful to note that several factors have contributed to this state of affairs but does not hesitate to assert that an "excessive labor supply" driven by immigration numbers is a primary one.

What about the oft-heard canard that immigrants contribute to the nation's wealth through tax payments? Of course, it is true that naturalized workers pay state and federal income taxes like everyone else, and even illegals pay sales taxes. But this simplistic argument overlooks several negative factors. Immigrants entering the United States in recent decades are far more likely to be impoverished and to come from countries in which a culture of poverty is deeply ingrained. Rubenstein reveals that, as of 2004, more than 17 percent of all immigrants were impoverished; of these, the rates were far higher among immigrants from Latin America (*e.g.*, 26 percent of Mexicans, 20 percent of Guatemalans). Immigrants of Asian origin, by contrast, are impoverished at rates either below the national average for native-born Americans (12 percent) or slightly above (*e.g.*, Koreans, at 13.2 percent). Thus, most immigrants today are more likely to pay less in taxes than native-born workers and to become welfare dependent. Welfare dependency among immigrants from Third World countries has, in fact, become a chronic problem. It is true that the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act curtailed most disbursements of federally provided welfare to new immigrants (requiring them to wait five years after naturalization before becoming eligible). But the states have often filled the gap. Drawing on information provided by a 2004 Census Bureau survey, Rubenstein notes that almost 30 percent of all immigrant households are dependent upon "at least one major welfare program," as opposed to 18.2 percent of native households. Among Latin Americans exclusively, the numbers are much higher. Forty-one percent of Hispanic immigrants receive some "means tested cash benefit." One of these is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Although it is not technically a "welfare" program, the EITC subsidizes the incomes of impoverished workers with children. Rubenstein notes that the EITC is supposed to be disbursed only to workers with legal status, but "the IRS, with its celebrated kind-heartedness, allows immigrants to claim EITC benefits retroactively for up to three years before they obtain legal work status." Thus, IRS policy rewards illegals for breaking the law and for doing work for which "they may very well not have paid taxes." EITC, by the way, is a $30-billion annual program.

Other entitlements that are enjoyed by immigrants include public education and medical treatment. While illegal immigrants are not entitled to Medicaid, they cannot legally be denied emergency-room treatment, a service that, as Hartman argues, "includes much of what Medicaid would cover (at twice the cost)." Steven Greenhut, in "Greetings from Ground Zero," an essay on the detrimental effects immigration is producing in Southern California, reports that

> Southern California's hospitals are being inundated by illegal immigrants who use them for all their health-care needs, from immunizations to check-ups to true emergency services. They do not pay anything for any of this.

In fact, more than half a dozen emergency rooms in the greater Los Angeles area have shut down in recent years, and a number of others are at risk of being forced into closure because of the enormous financial drain incurred by providing services to in-

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creasing numbers of patients with no health insurance. Other cities around the country report similar problems.

The costs of education are simply staggering. Most Americans are aware that, under the prevailing interpretation of the 14th Amendment, children born to illegal aliens automatically become U.S. citizens and are thus eligible for public education; few Americans seem cognizant, however, of the 1982 Supreme Court ruling *Plyler* v. *Doe*, which stipulates that the illegal siblings of those children also have rights to a public education. The Federation for Immigration Reform (FAIR) estimates that there are at least 1.5 million school-aged illegal immigrants in the United States, in addition to at least 2.5 million of their U.S.-born siblings. According to FAIR, if the cost of educating both groups is combined, the total K-12 expenditure in tax dollars nationwide is over $28 billion. In Texas alone, according to James Bernsen ("The Costs of Illegal Immigration to Texas"), the expenditure in 2004 was $3.6 billion, roughly 10.5 percent of the state's entire K-12 education budget.

The overall economic effect of immigration is, without question, a fiscal loss. As Rubenstein reports, immigrants (legal and illegal) contribute roughly $12.5 billion annually to the economy (one tenth of one percent of GDP). On the deficit side, the drain on taxpayers amounts to over $200 billion annually; thus, the net fiscal result is a $187.5 billion burden on the public coffers. Confronted with such figures (which are widely available for those who care to look), it is difficult to see how anyone can still defend the present immigration *status quo*.

Washington is infested with pro-immigration lobbyists, however, so clearly, someone benefits. Peter Brimelow, who minces no words on this subject, argues (in "Big Business and Immigration: Inside the Mind of the Corporate Elite") that

> current immigration policy lends itself to explanation in the crudest Marxist terms. Quite simply, it is a savage attack by the American rich on the American poor (and middle class) . . .

George J. Borjas (in an interview with Brimelow) estimates that two percent of GDP is transferred annually from labor to capital as a result of the lowered wage rates made possible by immigration. (To put this in perspective, Washington currently spends 3.7 percent of the U.S. GDP annually on defense—a total of $439 billion.) The numbers would seem to justify Brimelow's characterization of this plunder as a "savage attack," yet elsewhere in the same essay, his analysis is somewhat less belligerent. Having worked as an editor at *Forbes* for a number of years, he is all too familiar with the self-justifications of the business class. In his view, their support for current immigration policy reveals a "state of prelapsarian innocence about their activities." They ignore the displacement of native workers caused by their hiring practices, or they rationalize such practices by pretending to believe that importing foreign workers is essential for the greater good of the economy. This same innocence, Brimelow would have us believe, allows them to overlook the fact that a veritable "cornucopia of government subsidies" underwrites all this cheap labor. Yet, sooner or later, the business class "will start to be alarmed by a policy which is destroying the country in which they live, and in which they hope their children and grandchildren will live." This sanguine view owes something to Brimelow's conviction that "[c]lass politics are relatively rare in American history" and that, in time, "there will be divisions within the business elite." Such divisions, presumably, will help to foster a change in immigration policy. I hope, of course, that Brimelow is right about this, but some might argue that he, too, is suffering from a degree of "prelapsarian innocence."

While economic indicators are important, the cultural transformations wrought by immigration are even more critical. Statistics are easily packaged for news broadcasts, but cultural change cannot be quantified and is often embedded in historical contexts that few in the mainstream media can be bothered to examine. In one of this volume's key essays ("Up Mexico Way: The Cultural Transformation of America"), Thomas Fleming examines perhaps the most profound problem raised by mass immigration. "Any culture," he writes, "that expects to absorb . . . a large population of aliens must have a coherent sense of itself." It must be unified by a common language, by shared moral and religious traditions, by a deep sense of its own history. A collective belief in abstract "democratic values" and a passion for material affluence are not nearly enough. How is an authentic national identity transmitted? Does America still possess such an identity? Fleming insists that

> strong institutions and traditions are required: a national literature and an accepted set of classics, effective schools that reflect and reinforce the moral and social outlook of the nation, a self-confident church . . . [and] some form of adolescent initiation such as universal military training.

By this standard, America has perhaps been fatally weakened, not only by the influx of foreign cultures and traditions, but by the erosion of her own cultural traditions and by the crumbling of those institutions that define her "common life." Indeed, what binds Americans today is, ironically, the "mass culture that is destroying the American character." By "mass culture," Fleming presumably means a culture that is no longer rooted in regional and local custom, in networks of kinship, deference, and duty—a culture disseminated largely by the electronic media and shaped by a small but powerful deracinated elite consisting of capitalist profiteers, Hollywood producers and their hirelings, the advertising and entertainment industries (forgive the redundancy), and the better part of our academic intelligentsia, not to mention the music pro-

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ducers who provide the soundscape for our vacuous collective fantasies.

Such a "culture" is little prepared to withstand the unprecedented immigration onslaught that now faces us. In the past, an America with a much stronger sense of her own traditions and a more vigorous confidence in her shared moral convictions was able effectively to assimilate large numbers of immigrants without serious damage to her core identity. Today, however, a vast number of new immigrants belong to a culture that differs profoundly from the European culture planted here by the colonists. This is especially true of Latin Americans—of Mexicans, in particular. Delving at some length into Mexican history, Fleming reminds us of the "prevalence of the Indian element in the Mexican gene pool." Though the Mexican elite class has "a great deal of European blood," Mexico sees herself "as an indigenous nation"—one that has long harbored a good deal of hostility toward her *gringo* neighbor to the north. Moreover, hers is a culture in which violence and corruption are endemic. In one of the most eloquent essays in this collection, "Dystopia Unlimited: Or, The Flowers of Regress (and Catastrophe)," Chilton Williamson worries about the potential for the "Mexicanization of the American political system—that is to say, its destruction and barbarization." The much-admired stability of the American system is rooted in Anglo-American respect for the rule of law, in a centuries-old antipathy toward tyranny. It is not difficult to see what a *reconquista* of the territories that once were Mexican will mean for such states as New Mexico and California, for there (and elsewhere), the Mexican tradition "of self-indulgent violence, sadism, lawlessness, intemperance, intolerance, and irresponsibility" is already much in evidence. Fleming suggests that, if we wish to see the face of an America overrun by Mexican immigrants, we should look at border cities such as Juárez and El Paso, which are "ugly hybrid[s] of the worst of American and Mexican cultures." All along the border, "Mexico and America are redefining themselves and each other in a cultural equivalent of Spanglish."

Many of the contributors to *Immigration and the American Future* do not provide much reason for optimism about that future, and with good reason. Still, there are signs that Americans may be waking from their demographic slumber. Roger D. McGrath ("National Sovereignty Goes Local") surveys what might well be called a grassroots rebellion against the federal government's "dereliction" of duty. In Arizona, Colorado, and Georgia, or in states as far from the Mexican border as Pennsylvania, state legislators and local authorities are becoming the *avant-garde* in this new resistance. Arizona's Proposition 200, passed in 2004, has been a bellwether for similar legislative action elsewhere. Among other stipulations, it threatens with criminal penalties any public employee who fails to report illegal aliens or to verify the immigration status of those who apply for benefits. In Georgia, the Security and Immigration Compliance Act (2006) requires "employers to access a federal database to verify the legal residency of their workers, [and further requires] recipients of state benefits to prove that they are in the country legally." Recent reports suggest that this is producing results. According to McGrath, "the once strong Latino home-buying market has declined precipitously since Governor Perdue signed the act into law." And, of course, most *Chronicles* readers will already be familiar with Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, Arizona, who has organized a posse for rounding up illegals and their "coyotes." But Arpaio is hardly alone. All across the Southwest, county sheriffs are organizing. The Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition, for instance, formed in 2005 and has, since 2006, met with sheriffs in New Mexico, Arizona, and California to establish the Southwest Border Sheriff's Coalition, in order to coordinate efforts in apprehending illegals.

These are just a few of the many signs of constructive revolt brewing in the heartland, but this revolt, since it is focused almost exclusively on the problem of illegal immigration, lacks the scope to deal with the larger immigration threat. In the years since the 1990 Immigration Act capped legal immigration at 700,000 per year, there have been only two years in which legal immigration has fallen below that number. Even worse, the 1990 cap exempts the additional foreigners who are brought in legally under the "immediate family" mandate of the 1965 Immigration Act. In 2006 alone, over 580,000 immigrants were admitted on that basis. Thus, well over a million new *legal* immigrants per year are taking up residence in a country that has virtually lost the will to assimilate them; even if the will were there, the immigrants are clearly too numerous for assimilation efforts to have any significant effect. More radical action is required.

Back in 2003, Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO) introduced the Mass Immigration Reduction Act. As the late Sam Francis predicted at the time, the act was smothered in its cradle, but Tancredo has continued to call for a moratorium on legal immigration—and clearly, this is an idea whose time has come. A moratorium (for, let's say, 20 years—a biblical generation) would not solve all our immigration problems. Reducing the numbers, however drastically, would not undo the damage already done, but it would buy us some desperately needed time to ask just who we really are. In one of the final essays in *Immigration and the American Future*, Guido Vignelli ("False Rights, Real Duties, Prudent Rules: A Christian View of Immigration") argues vigorously that a proper understanding of the Christian moral tradition permits a "preferential option for the nation." As Pope John Paul II affirmed in 1985, a nation is a "spiritual heritage," and, as Christians, we are obligated to "confirm, maintain, and develop it." This is an "important task," said the Pope, "in particular for those which must defend their own existence and essential identity . . . from the risks of a destruction generated from outside or of a decomposition from inside." Let those who have ears hear. ◁

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A Self-Made (Mad)man

by Clark Stooksbury

Cheney: The Untold Story of America's Most Powerful and Controversial Vice President
by Stephen F. Hayes
New York: HarperCollins; 578 pp., $27.95

By now, it should be clear to all but the most loyal Republicans that the government of the United States is controlled by madmen. In the beginning, George W. Bush and Dick Cheney seemed comparatively normal; their first few months in office were a relief after the farcical second term of Bill Clinton. It was only after the horrific attacks of September 11 that the true nature of the Bush administration began to emerge.

Stephen F. Hayes, a senior writer for the *Weekly Standard* and the author of *Cheney*, has a different view of the Vice President and his boss. According to its dust jacket, *Cheney* reveals a "very different Dick Cheney from the one America thinks it knows." To the extent that it debunks left-wing fantasies that the Vice President is actually Satan, it does as promised. Beyond that, Hayes details the high points of the veep's life while offering no real insight into the man's character.

Cheney's life has been marked by his ability to bounce back from adversity and his knack for being at the right place at the right time. His first big setback came from Yale University. Cheney was admitted to the prestigious Ivy League institution with a full ride but failed out and lost his scholarship. He returned only to flunk a second time and went back to Wyoming, where he eventually received a degree from the state university in Laramie.

Another obstacle he had to overcome was his health. Hayes relates how Cheney, while running for Congress in 1978,

> was awakened by a tingling sensation in the ring and pinkie fingers on his left hand. It felt as though he had bumped his elbow, but he was in bed and until only moments earlier had been fast asleep. He was only thirty-seven years old; heart trouble seemed like a remote possibility.

But that is what it was, only the first of several episodes that would plague him. (*Cheney* even has an index entry for "heart attacks.")

The defining issue of Dick Cheney's career, as depicted by Hayes, is his support for executive power. While Cheney describes the House of Representatives as his political home, his most important experiences have been in the executive branch. He started in the Nixon administration as a protégé of Donald Rumsfeld. The two men worked together at the Office of Economic Opportunity, starting in 1969.

This was, as Hayes describes it, a "decision point" for Cheney. He came to Washington as a doctoral candidate in political science at the University of Wisconsin to work as a congressional intern. Taking the government job effectively ended his academic career. Hayes writes that

> the years Cheney spent at Rumsfeld's side would provide the young political scientist with a political education that wasn't available at Yale, Wyoming, or Wisconsin. And what he saw would shape his views for the rest of his political career.

Cheney followed Rumsfeld to the Cost of Living Council (which enforced wage-and-price controls) and to the White House staff under Gerald Ford. The two parted ways when Rumsfeld left for his first term at the helm of the Pentagon, while Cheney stayed on at the White House as chief of staff.

It was during these years that Cheney's political views solidified. His experience attempting to regulate prices led him to be suspicious of government interference in the economy. Government interference in the private lives of Americans and in the affairs of foreign governments was a different matter. When the *New York Times* published Seymour Hersh's exposé detailing the illegal domestic spying and other CIA abuses of power in December 1974, Cheney was as much concerned with protecting the prerogatives of the executive branch as he was with containing the rogue intelligence agency. Hayes quotes from a Cheney memo citing the need to protect the CIA from "overreaction by Congress, which could inhibit their ability to perform their primary function."

Hayes details the supposedly crippling effects such oversight would have on the CIA, because of the "political whims—and grandstanding" of the Congress.

> The reforms produced lawyering and legislative second-guessing that would lead to near-paralysis of the intelligence community . . . [I]n the months before the first Gulf War, an Air Force general discussed the possibility of targeting leaders of the Iraqi regime . . . Cheney's strong rebuke included a warning that such "decapitation" strikes might violate the ban on political assassinations that dated from the Ford administration.

Hayes also attributes the failure of the government to get Osama bin Laden in the 1990's to congressional intervention in the affairs of the CIA in the 1970's, in spite of the fact that the Clinton administration's cruise-missile attack on abandoned terrorist camps in Afghanistan, although ineffectual, was clearly an attempt to kill Bin Laden.

While in the House during the 1980's, Cheney got another opportunity to defend the prerogatives of the presidency, when the Reagan administration decided to wage a private war in Central America, funded by the sale of arms to Iran. For Cheney, it was "not an option" to decline to intervene in Central America. According to Hayes, Cheney believed that restricting funding for the Nicaraguan Contras was the "worst kind of congressional micromanaging of U.S. foreign policy."

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Cheney was able to defend this view when the Iran-Contra scandal unraveled in 1986 by serving on the House select committee to investigate the affair. He used his position to serve as an advocate for the administration instead of as an investigator. His closing remarks contain an astonishing admission, couched in such low-key language that it is easily overlooked. In the course of presenting mitigating excuses for the Reagan administration's policies, Cheney remarked that "[t]he vital importance of keeping the Nicaraguan democratic resistance alive until Congress could reverse itself and repeal the Boland Amendment" made the administration's actions "understandable." In other words, Cheney was willing to excuse the usurpation by the president of Congress's spending power until such time as Congress changed its mind on the matter.

The peak of Cheney's career occurred when George W. Bush selected him to run for vice president. Not surprisingly, Stephen Hayes devotes almost half of the book to the years since 2000. Hayes covers the important points from the disputed election in Florida to the Vice President's conflicts with Valerie Plame and Joseph Wilson that ultimately led to Cheney's chief of staff, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, being convicted of perjury.

The final half of the book focuses on Cheney's ever-present concern for the supposedly eroding powers of the presidency, and on a defense by Hayes and his subject of the disastrous invasion of Iraq by the United States. To that end, it reads like a very fat issue of the *Weekly Standard*. Hayes rehashes arguments over pre-war intelligence on Iraq and the Prague vacations of Mohammed Atta, oblivious to the fact that, even if he could produce authenticated photos of Saddam buying plane tickets for the September 11 hijackers, it would make no difference. Saddam's regime toppled like a statue, but the postwar occupation has been a failure, premised as it was on absurd beliefs about the ease of planting liberal democracy in the arid Iraqi soil. Defects in the war's premise were compounded by the incompetence of the Bush administration—in particular, of Cheney's former mentor, Donald Rumsfeld. Invading Iraq to contain a threat from Saddam has worked as well as burning down a house to protect it from burglars.

Stephen Hayes includes a lengthy quotation from Defense Secretary Cheney in 1992, explaining why the costs of occupying Iraq after the Gulf War were greater than any benefits that would accrue. It is clear that Dick Cheney showed far better judgment in George H.W. Bush's administration than he has displayed in that of Bush *fils*. The essential failure of *Cheney* is that Stephen Hayes offers no insight into why this change occurred, presumably because he thinks that the change is perfectly rational.

Cheney will sit largely unread on the shelves of the dwindling band of Bush enthusiasts. Meanwhile, the story of how a sensible and moderate person such as Dick Cheney transformed himself into a reckless advocate of aggressive war awaits an author.

Clark Stooksbury writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.

"Here—This Is it!"

by Fr. Michael P. Orsi

Ronald Knox as Apologist: Wit, Laughter and the Popish Creed
by Milton Walsh
San Francisco: Ignatius Press; 248 pp., $14.95

In the Catholic Church, apologetics—explaining the Faith—was on its way to becoming a lost art during the post-Vatican II era. But thanks to Mother Angelica's efforts on EWTN and the many classic publications emanating from Ignatius Press, this important form of evangelization has not been completely lost. However, the uproar caused last summer by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's "Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine of the Faith" (July 10), which reaffirmed that the one, true Church "subsists" in the Catholic Church, reminds us how important apologetics is for extra- and intra-ecclesial instruction and understanding.

From the beginning of Christianity, apologists such as Justin Martyr and Origen have preached and written on Catholic beliefs to clarify the Faith for the faithful, to answer the attacks of Church opponents, and to attract converts. Before the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was the premiere apologist in America. Another important figure in apologetics (and a contemporary of Sheen) was the Englishman Msgr. Ronald Knox. In Ignatius Press's newly released *Ronald Knox as Apologist: Wit, Laughter and the Popish Creed*, Milton Walsh reintroduces us to this scholarly convert who became a priest and dedicated his life to teaching the truths of the Faith.

Like the great John Henry Cardinal Newman, Ronald Knox (1888-1957) was led in his thirst for truth from Anglicanism to Rome. The centrality of truth in Knox's work is best summed up in the following quip:

> "What is truth?" Pilate asked, and it serves him right that he should be put there in the middle of the Credo, as if the Church were determined to go on saying to him to the end of time, "Here, you fool, this is it!"

For Knox, the truths proclaimed by the Church are guaranteed by Her apostolicity. In a polemical letter to his father, who was a minister of the evangelical wing of the Church of England, Knox compared

> the Church of Rome to a shop window in which there was no need to examine the goods, because over the door there was a sign "This Is The Depot Ordained By Christ Himself."

The book is more of a primer than a biography, offering us a sampling

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of Knox's writings and whetting the reader's appetite to study both Knox and apologetics in general. The brief sketch of Knox's career provided in the early chapters helps us to appreciate his development as an apologist. Originally, Knox was more comfortable in the intellectual stratosphere of the academy. He was also more oriented to the historical past, which is evidenced in a series of talks he gave at weekly men's conferences while at Oxford (1926-39). These talks formed the basis for a series of books, *The Belief of Catholics*, which synthesized the Faith for general consumption.

However, a fortuitous request by Lady Daphne Acton for instruction in the Faith in 1939, along with an unexpected chaplaincy to high-school-aged girls who were seeking refuge at the Acton home during World War II, brought a new sensitivity to Knox's work. It also helped him to recognize his stake in the present and the future, and moved him to apply his apologetic insights to current events. Evelyn Waugh, a friend and fellow Catholic apologist, observed this emphasis in Knox's book *God and the Atom* (1945). "It was a moral and philosophical tract offered to a public obsessed by practical politics," Waugh wrote, noting that Knox "felt himself charged with an urgent message of consolation to people who did not know that they had been hurt."

Knox's poignant comparison of Protestant and Catholic apologetics provides a valuable insight into the focus of his later efforts. "I would say that the Protestant approach to apologetics gives the ordinary Englishman an impression of reality without truth," he wrote, "while the Catholic approach to apologetics gives him the impression of truth without reality." This formulation is mindful of the deterioration that Mainline Protestantism had undergone because of the unchecked acceptance of modern biblical criticism and its logical outgrowth, the Social Gospel, which lent itself to a secular religious understanding. One can also detect in it the resonance of Knox's critical analysis of Catholic apologetics among the fathers of Vatican II, particularly in *Gaudium et Spes*, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, which encouraged Catholics to participate in shaping society with the truths of the Gospel.

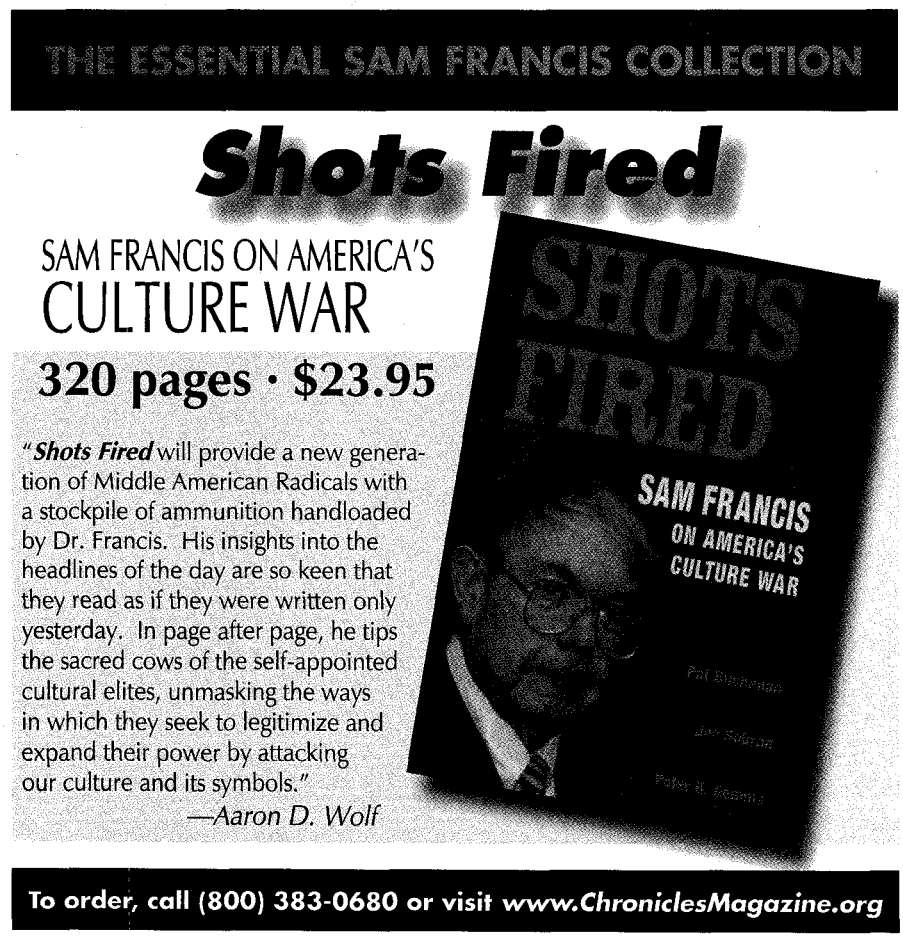
In presenting Knox's apologetics, Walsh provides an important resource for the new evangelization called for by Pope John Paul II—one that underscores the call of Pope Benedict XVI for a renewed effort to demonstrate the correlation between faith and reason. Passages from Knox's work and Walsh's commentary are invaluable for those seeking a deeper appreciation of Catholic beliefs and the interconnectedness of reason and revelation (as well as of will, grace, and faith). Knox insisted that "faith does not alter logical certitude," and that "The two principles of reason and revelation are interlocked."

However, he did warn that there are some truths too deep for the human mind to understand. His rich exposition of the credal truths (the Trinity, the Incarnation, Four Marks of the Church, the Sacraments) will move the reader to delve more deeply into Knox's work. Of the Incarnation, Knox writes:

> He was God already when he hung upon the cross. He was man still, when he ascended into heaven. The flying arches had been thrown out from both sides, and had met in the middle. *Habemus Pontificem* (We have a bridge).

Walsh's work will be a welcome aid to those interested in combating current religious relativism and indifferentism. It will also be helpful to anyone who wishes to understand Catholicism more deeply or to engage in ecumenical dialogue regarding the uniqueness of Christ as Savior, the oneness of the Catholic Church, and the integral role of the papacy.

Fr. Michael P. Orsi is chaplain and Research Fellow in Law and Religion at the Ave Maria Law School in Ann Arbor, Michigan.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by Aaron D. Wolf

National Religion

Americans are a people of deeply held religious conviction. If any has doubts, let him look on the most serious of our sacred holidays and believe.

Naturally, it is a federal holiday, but that fact alone does not convey the magnitude of this special day. For, unlike other federal holidays, this one carries with it a gravitas—a holiness—that says it is special. You can tell, because we don't mark the day with fireworks and pop music, or the pardoning of a turkey, but by a singular devotion to the very words of our national religion's founder. There's no public debate over it. No one says, "Hey, it isn't fair to the *x*'s and the *y*'s and the *z*'s if we focus on one tradition and ignore the others." This *is* our tradition, and we are not ashamed.

In the former days, when we were weak and ignorant, we had to be taught to be ashamed of our Old Religion. At first, when the bigoted ("one who is obstinately convinced of the superiority of one's own opinions and prejudiced against those who hold different opinions") nature of our Old Faith was exposed, we attempted to sand down all the rough edges, especially when it came to our Former Big Day. We hired some members of another religion to write us some new songs, and we transformed our Former Big Day into a celebration of shopping. This, of course, would not do, because, despite what Milton Friedman had taught us, shopping alone could not serve as the basis of a truly national holiday, let alone a national religion.

It was only then that the Third Great Awakening dawned and we realized that we already had a new religion. The transition has been so smooth that many of us probably still do not notice the difference. The parallels, indeed, are striking. The prophet of our new religion came as a preacher of the Old One—and, like our Old Prophet, he preached revolution. Just as the Old Rabbi's qualifications were called into question ("Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"), so, too, have some criticized our doctor's credentials. And what did the new prophet get for his selfless efforts? The same thing the Old One got!

One of our earliest hymnwriters, St. Bono, revealed the similarities between the two religions' founders in a song—"Pride (In the Name of Love)"—that is now sung in a few of our old/new churches: "One Man come, He to justify; one man, to overthrow!" Yes, the Former was the "One Man, betrayed with a kiss." But concerning the one who followed after—well, as St. Bono and every anchorperson, schoolteacher, president, and candidate of either party will confess to you boldly, *not one of us* is worthy to loosen his shoelaces.

Early morning, April 4, a shot
rings out in the Memphis sky—
"Free at last!" They took your
life, but they could not take
your pride
In the name of love!

We knew that the Former Big Day had lost all of its meaning when most of us refused to call it by name, preferring to say "Holiday" instead. Our leaders still recognize Holiday, along with other minor festivals of different religions, but it is only when you look at the federal holiday of our new religion that you can see how a faith held in common by an entire nation is celebrated. Our President even set up a website devoted to it—*mlkday.gov*. (Imagine the reaction of the American people if they were to discover a dot-gov devoted to Holiday!)

Last December, the presidential candidates fiercely debated whether it was appropriate for one among their number to make use of a mysterious floating symbol of our Old Religion in connection with our Former Big Day. Then, in January, they lined up to proclaim, with one voice, their devotion to the new prophet. One called the prophet his "hero, . . . because [he] practiced the libertarian principles of civil disobedience and nonviolence." Another, standing in the very pulpit where the fallen prophet once stood, showed he was the fulfillment of the Old Testament, the antitype of Moses instructing the people of God how to bring down the walls of Jericho. The prophet, said he, is an "icon."

Such thoughts were echoed by the clergy of the Old Religion. One Catholic bishop proclaimed that the prophet "gave his life for the Gospel values of non-violence and peace for all." A popular conservative Protestant pastor encouraged all of his followers, if they had the time, to rewrite their sermons in order to "make something" of the federal holiday, to celebrate the work of the prophet. If you need to "find a good word" to say about him, just "Google his name." But please, "You need not belabor his sins."

As all of this unitary devotion was occurring, we received confirmation that, thank godamighty, we are at last free of the Old Religion, when sports network ESPN announced its punishment for host Dana Jacobsen. While throwing a drunken fit on stage at a celebrity gala, she accidentally hollered "F--k Notre Dame" and "F--k Jesus," too.

Now, ten days' suspension with pay is more than sufficient a punishment for inveighing against our former Deity. I mean, it's not like she stood up, in the bleak midwinter, and cried, "F--k Morehouse, and F--k Martin Luther King, Jr.!" ©

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by Scott P. Richert

Three Coins

The weather in Rome has been on the chilly side, but compared with Rockford in January, it's positively balmy. Warm enough, in fact, to risk a charge of heresy (or at least philistinism) by capping the first full day of The Rockford Institute's 2008 Winter School with, not a glass of Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, but a pint of beer. And not just any beer, but an unfiltered, heavily hopped light ale named ReAle, from the brewery of the commune of Borgorose, population 4,500, about 70 kilometers northeast of Rome. The ale is reminiscent of the best beers produced by the few remaining local breweries scattered throughout the Midwest. It takes a mass market to make a bad beer, and sadly, in the United States, very few local markets remain. For now, most of Europe has avoided our fate, but the E.U. bureaucrats in Brussels are doing their best to impose it from above.

The pint is hand drawn over the course of five minutes as the bartender attempts to balance the slightly cloudy elixir, more golden than brown, with the creamy white head of foam. No American bar, even a brew pub, would make a customer wait so long, for fear of losing a sale. Here, the wait simply adds to the expectation, since we have sampled the ReAle already. There's far more to do and to see in Rome than in Rockford, yet life here moves at a much more human pace.

The bar is literally a hole in the wall in Trastevere, its name painted roughly over an unfinished wooden door. Inside, eight or ten barstools line the bar and the opposite wall, and the bartender stands in a galley barely large enough for him to turn around. With his thin face, light mustache, and long, curly locks flowing down to his shoulders, he looks like a more delicate version of Weird Al Yankovic. That, and the little lamp next to the cash register, with its decoupage lampshade featuring images of Liza Minnelli, briefly give me pause, until the only other patron of the bar, a native Roman, turns and introduces himself.

He apologizes for the heated discussion that he and the bartender have been having. "In Italy, there are only two things that men argue about. And since he—" (tossing his head toward Weird Al) "—doesn't like soccer, you know it has to be a woman."

"I like American football—the Chicago Bears," the bartender tells us, and Mark Kennedy and I explain that our hometown is not far from Chicago. That's all the prompting that the other patron needs to begin a long disquisition on the superiority of soccer—not just over football, but over every other sport invented by man.

"In all other sports, you can stop the clock and challenge the rulings of the referees. In soccer, the ref's decision is final, and the play keeps moving. And we have only a limited number of substitutions. Then, if someone gets hurt, you play with one man down."

All of this "makes soccer more a game of chance than of skill. A weak team and a strong team can end up in a championship game, and the weak team might win. It's the unpredictability that makes it so exciting."

There's more—much more—and I listen politely, but my thoughts have turned elsewhere. Our Italian friend may be talking about soccer rather than roulette or craps, but I hear echoes of Andrei Navrozov. Andrei's passion for gambling may be (as he suggests) a rebellion against the increasing monotony of the modern world, as exemplified by life in the United States, but I wonder if there's not something more, something that only a European living in a still vibrant city or town can understand. The men playing the tables at Aspinall's likely have a somewhat different outlook on their gaming than do the blue-haired ladies in lime-green leisure suits pulling the slots at Ho-Chunk Casino.

Today, my wife and I ate lunch at the Hostaria Farnese, a wonderful restaurant not much bigger than this bar, off of the Campo dei Fiori. We had eaten there twice on our previous trip in May 2000, and, other than now being denominated in euros rather than lira, the menu has not changed. Before lunch, we browsed the stalls of the daily market in the Campo, where the same woman gave us samples of the same prosciutto and bresaola that we'd tried over seven-and-a-half years ago.

Rockford's downtown, over the same period, has been remade more than once, and some storefronts have housed two or three restaurants in succession. The monotony of life in much of America is a monotony of change. The stability of life in Rome is the very opposite of monotony, and perhaps that can make a game of chance more an affirmation of life than an act of desperation.

These thoughts are still inchoate a week later, as I stop in at the corner café for a quick espresso before the afternoon lectures. Quiet in the morning after 6:30 Mass, the café is bustling now, and I've finished my espresso before the soccer fan from the bar claps me on the shoulder and calls out, "*Buona sera*!" We chat briefly as we push our way up to the register, then fall silent as I pull out my wallet and fumble for change. The espresso is 70 eurocents, and I realize with pleasure that the three coins I've grabbed without looking make up the exact amount. A perfect espresso; a chance meeting; a random draw; and I walk out onto the cobbled streets of Rome a happy man. ◇

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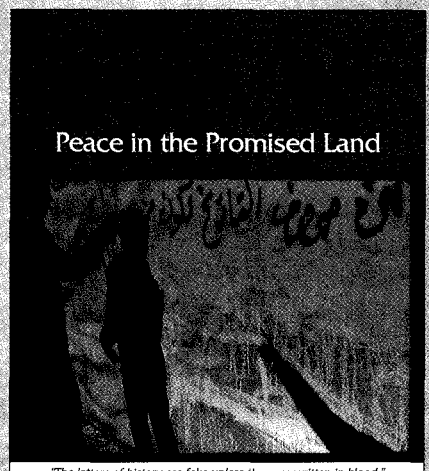

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Letter From Kansas City

by Matthew A. Roberts

The "Smart" Port

In saner times, countries had borders, and along these borders were ports for the inspection and tagging of goods coming into or leaving the country. The border, after all, would be the logical place to conduct such business, since it is the *terminus ad quem* cargo would be outside or inside a country.

Globalization, however, attempts to render such common sense anachronistic. Through the lens of this ideology, borders are vestigial obstacles from quainter days, and ports should now be built inland where land and labor are cheaper, and crowded coastal ports can be avoided. Such dogma has infiltrated the minds of the Kansas City elite. Their plan to create the Kansas City SmartPort, where Mexican officials will inspect goods before they are shipped *via* truck or train to Mexico, and then sent to Asia, is under way.

This customs facility, on the central artery of what many have labeled the "NAFTA Superhighway," would include a truck port in the city and a train port south of the city. Kansas City currently has approximately 10,000 acres designated as a free-trade zone, which would make it the largest such zone in any city in the United States. In the *Kansas City Star* (July 18, 2006), Rick Alm and Lynn Horsley described the project:

> Arm in arm with Mexican authorities, city officials for nearly two years have pressed the U.S. departments of State and Homeland Security to approve the first foreign customs clearing house on U.S. soil. Advocates said the unprecedented international trade operation could quickly emerge as a Midwestern funnel, drawing Mexico-bound American exports from an 11-state region.

Since the inland port would be a clearinghouse for goods going into Mexico, it would be run by Mexican officials. In 2004, a SmartPort official wrote in an e-mail that the customs area "would need to be designated as Mexican sovereign territory," similar to a foreign embassy. This statement drew wide criticism, prompting officials to change their tune. But legally, as a Mexican port, it would have to retain some sort of sovereign status.

The bottom line is that U.S. taxpayers are funding a project that will ultimately be controlled by Mexican interests. "The Mexican government would have no significant investment and would occupy the customs facility operation rent-free," wrote Alm and Horsley. Lobbying for this port have been advocates from the "Mexiplex" office building at 16th and Baltimore, which houses the Mexican Consulate, the Mexican Business Initiatives Corp., and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City.

And so far, Mexico has obtained a stellar deal. Kansas City approved a $2.5-million low-interest loan to build a customs facility in the West Bottoms, and SmartPort has set up terms "to avoid imposing any expenses on Mexico above its ordinary border costs." Otherwise, SmartPort President Chris Gutierrez told the *Kansas City Star* (July 18, 2006), "that reduces their rationale for using Kansas City."

Public officials have repeatedly emphasized that this port pertains only to outgoing—not incoming—cargo, so residents need not worry about drugs and illegal aliens sneaking into Kansas City. Regardless, this agreement is pregnant with reciprocal language. And thanks to our ruling elites' decision that we no longer need to manufacture anything but "financial services" and "ideas," the United States imports more than she exports. Thus, it is likely that a Washington-sponsored fast-paced clearinghouse will eventually be used for imports as well. Once such an inland port is established, the scope of the project will only broaden. Mexican trade officials, visiting Kansas City in 2006, made it very clear that they were pushing for a reciprocal project in Mexico, a U.S.-customs clearinghouse on Mexican soil, to facilitate the flow of goods from Mexico (ultimately, from Asia) into the United States.

In a brochure produced in 2006 by KC SmartPort, the reciprocal nature of this agreement is quite clear. "Two Worlds . . . One Route" envisions Asian goods that are prescreened in Southeast Asia arriving in Mexico, then sent on "to inland trade-processing centers in Kansas City and elsewhere in the United States." Mentioning the 2005 cooperative pact between Kansas City and Lazaro Cardenas "to increase cargo volume between the two cities," the brochure predicts that shipping containers through Lazaro Cardenas into the United States will be "up to 15 percent less expensive than through Long Beach or Los Angeles." In fact, the Mexican inland ports will likely eclipse the American inland port, once this Trojan horse is built in Kansas City. David Burdick, a Kansas City-based international cargo broker, pointed out to the *Kansas City Star* (October 14, 2005) that "Labor costs alone are 64 percent cheaper in Mexico. As soon as Kansas is clicking, everybody will want to use it."

It should come as no surprise, then, that this project has been negotiated largely behind closed doors (although Kansas City residents will be required to pay for most of it). An e-mail sent by Chris Gutierrez on March 10, 2006, obtained under the Missouri Sunshine Law and made public by Jerome R. Corsi, reads:

> The one negative that was conveyed to us was the problems and pressure the media attention has created for both sides.

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They want us to stop promoting the facility to the press. We let them both know that we never issued a proactive press release on this . . .

Yet, thanks to the vigilance of local citizens, many of the plan's details were discovered and publicized. As a result, a backlash has occurred, and plans for the facility are not as certain as they once were. On November 4 of last year, because of complaints from area businesses, Kansas City rejected SmartPort's plan to locate its facilities in the West Bottoms but authorized SmartPort officials to search for another suitable location within the city limits. Whether they will find such a location, move to another city, or cancel the project altogether remains to be seen. The business elite, however, intoxicated by utopian dreams of globalization, will continue to lobby for this project, while the rest of us hope that our ports and inspection facilities remain on our borders.

Matthew A. Roberts writes from Parkville, Missouri.

Letter From Louisville

by Jerry Salyer

Governor Berry and the Mad Farmers' Liberation Front

Wendell Berry's voice is rich and mellow, carrying a slight grit that comes from weathering, age, and experience. His accent is strong enough to flavor his words but mild enough to soothe his listeners. It is a surprisingly gentle voice for one so radical.

I sit listening to the Kentucky gentleman. With me are a hundred or so other students, scholars, a delegation of sisters—Dominican nuns from Nashville—and an assortment of local and not-so-local notables.

We are gathered in a conference room of Louisville's famed Seelbach Hotel, hosted by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, the Philadelphia Society, and the University of Louisville's McConnell Center. The Seelbach is a glamorous relic, evoking the Roaring Twenties, when Fitzgerald sampled the hotel's cigars and bourbon, and chose this sumptuous Bavarian tower as the site for Tom and Daisy Buchanan's wedding reception.

Our luncheon guest of honor seems to feel slightly out of place within this monument to cosmopolitan living, and he has a renowned shyness when it comes to the public spotlight. So Mr. Berry does what all skilled wordsmiths do when wishing to deflect the mind's eye of the collective from himself: He assumes the role of narrator. Instead of giving a speech, he renders himself invisible by telling a story and redirecting illumination onto the spiritual echoes of people who pass by and who have passed on.

I will not attempt to summarize, much less retell, Mr. Berry's dinnertime tale. Suffice it to say that it is well invested with blood and memory, the only hard currency of storytelling, and that it serves an interesting contrast to Fitzgerald's kind of narrative. Berry tells of graceful, slow people who knew themselves, while Fitzgerald told of blazing, fast people who lost their whole generation.

So perhaps this is an implicit question from Mr. Berry, arising from his very presence here among us as embodiment of an alternative way of being: Which people are we to be?

And perhaps standing behind Berry is Herbert Agar's restless ghost, challenging us with another demand: Who owns Kentucky?

As the gentleman-farmer concludes his prose-song of the past and the room offers him the standing ovation he richly deserves, I must confess to a perverse thought: I can't help but wonder who here would have rather heard a discourse on "the conservative movement" or the threat of "Islamofascism," or would rather have received pointers on how to rationalize rallying round Romney. Berry has expressed skepticism about the military-industrial complex and concerning U.S. involvement in wars from World War II to the present, so maybe some would rather have heard a *National Review* darling; perhaps some would regard a Hitchens or a Lieberman as a more appropriate representative of the "War on Terror" and the other essential tenets of Republican family values.

This conference on agrarianism and regionalism is a product of our "interesting times," as the Chinese curse goes—and the demographics reflect it. For the most part, the company is fantastic. At the table with my wife and me are several students from the Louisville Classical Academy, along with their school's headmistress and founder, a well-bred and cultured lady from out East (Eastern Kentucky, that is). She combines practical savvy, faith, and a passion for substantive learning—three qualities that are in short supply among Kentucky's other leaders at the moment. Her school exemplifies the maxim "Small is beautiful": Students become part of a close-knit community in a stately old neoclassical house, which differs dramatically from the impersonal penitentiary environment of more "progressive" Dewey-inspired facilities.

Across the room, my brother—familial expert on bourbon, the law, and political anachronism—shares a table with Franklin Sanders and his son, Justin. Franklin is as impressive intellectually as he is imposing physically, and yet, like Berry, he is a gentleman who subsists from the fruits of his own property. These men make their own homes, think their own thoughts, and demonstrate innate, fairly untapped radicalism.

Plenty of party functionaries showed up as well. And there are some full-fledged neoconservative goofballs—or at least ill-disguised warmongers—present, though here, they don't talk as loud nor walk as proud as usual. Their Sauronesque motto—*Join us, and we can rule the Middle East together*—doesn't have quite the catchy ring it once did.

Then, there are the Reaganites, for whom I have a soft spot. I can always identify with the sentiment of nostalgia, if not always with its object—

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in this case, a mythical Golden Age. The Reaganites are basically decent, intelligent, and likeable men who insist plaintively that the Constitution is alive, that Mr. Berry merely forgot to change his party affiliation back in the day when all the good Democrats were seeing the light.

As the luncheon crowd breaks up, a second, doubly perverse thought floats into my mind—that of Berry being elected governor.

It is doubly perverse because Berry himself would be mortified at the prospect. His natural role is that of truthsayer, not ruler. The suggestion of "Governor Berry" is, I emphasize, but a whimsical joke of mine, something to liven up the depressing and listless reality of the current governor's race between Ernie Fletcher and Steve Beshear—which is rather like watching two weevils walk over a biscuit.

These two supposedly grown men vie for the privilege and duty of speaking for the Bluegrass Nation but can't find much more to argue about than the legalization of casino gambling. Whether Kentuckian guardsmen should get shot in Baghdad, while their fields get renamed Little Costa Rica by developers, is not their concern, and they (especially Fletcher) will tell you as much.

Yet Ernie & Steve must also compete in the field of who can thump the Bible harder and present a more devoutly Christian image. (On second thought, I should concede some small consolation. As much as it might stick in their respective craws, both the Democratic and Republican machines have to reckon with the faith of the common folk.)

Of course, they'd rather be thumping their standardized educational textbooks. Or talking about "good jobs for Kentuckians." Neither Ernie nor Stevie are strangers to controversy. They both stand for Education and Prosperity, and they don't care who knows it, by golly. And, unlike Berry, they don't let trivial questions about what Education and Prosperity actually are distract them from the more pressing matter of where to buy more of it. Warning voters of Fletcher's mismanagement of education during his administration, Beshear's campaign website noted with alarm that "fewer than half of Kentucky 3- and 4-year olds are in preschool."

Color me scandalized! Somebody call Michael Moore and the Muckraker Battalion. Perhaps Kentucky should hire more truancy officers.

Next, Beshear will be warning us that the Commonwealth suffers from a disproportionately high number of live births.

I have repeatedly heard graduate students—natives, mind you—dutifully denounce Robert Penn Warren as another racist and sexist embodiment of the Dead White Male patriarchy. So much for "Kentucky education." At best, our children are being programmed as office drones and technicians and wage-slaves, who will struggle to earn the rent on their own inheritance. At worst, the citizens of Kentucky are subsidizing assorted imperial high schools, colleges, and universities whose aim is to inculcate the benighted primitives with the blessings of p.c. civilization. The liberal-arts curriculum of our outposts of educratic hegemony exist so that the Commonwealth's sons and daughters will instinctively spit upon their own poets, their own people.

In droves, the farmers of Kentucky have taken up second jobs to keep from becoming serfs of agribusiness. Family land is continually gobbled up by the wonderful whirring motors of progress and excreted in the form of long stretches of sprawl. Cities such as Phoenix and Detroit bask in cheap energy, while coal companies pay as little as possible to turn Appalachia into a replica of Mordor, only a mountaintop shorter.

Nearly 600 Kentucky guardsmen are deployed in places that most Kentuckians can't pronounce. They serve a cause that has about as much to do with their fathers' fields as the deconstructionist theories spewing out of Yale and Harvard have to do with the artistic genius of Bill Monroe.

In short, the Bluegrass State is being trampled, and Beshear and Fletcher want to see it trampled more.

So yes, "Berry for Governor" is a joke—but it's a joke that is prettier than the momentary reality, I think. By the time you read this, the election will be history, but that only means we have that much more time to gather momentum for the next one.

But wait: We still have to find a running mate to put on the Agrarian Party ticket. Who will be lieutenant governor in the Berry administration?

I, for one, nominate a yellow dog.

Any yellow dog—so long as he's loyal, knows the mortal limit of his own territory, and is trained to bark at plundering burglars and venomous rattlesnakes.

Jerry Salyer writes from Louisville, Kentucky.

Letter From Athens

by Makis Voridis

The Greek Conservative Revival

Last fall, in mid-September, a series of unprecedented fires raged across a large part of Peloponnese (including the area surrounding ancient Olympia), killing 68 people. Then, on September 16, something else happened that caused widespread panic—at least among liberals: For the first time in 30 years, a national conservative party (the People's Orthodox Rally) won seats in the Hellenic Parliament. The liberals responded the way liberals typically do—by engaging in name-calling.

For years, the political establishment in Greece, mirroring their colleagues in other European countries, have been out of touch with the real problems faced by the people. Thanks to an "open borders" trade policy, industrial and manufacturing companies have been transferring their operations to Eastern European countries, the manufacturing sector has disintegrated, and 21 percent of the Greek population lives below the poverty

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level (355 euros per month). At the same time, Greece faces an unprecedented influx of illegal immigrants. The government's best estimate is that they number between 750,000 and 2.5 million, which amounts to one quarter of the population. When it comes to foreign policy, the two largest parties—the social-democratic PASOK and the liberal New Democracy—hold positions that could best be described as "national suicide": Both support the accession of Turkey to the European Union, the European Constitution, and the surrender to Brussels of any remnant of national sovereignty.

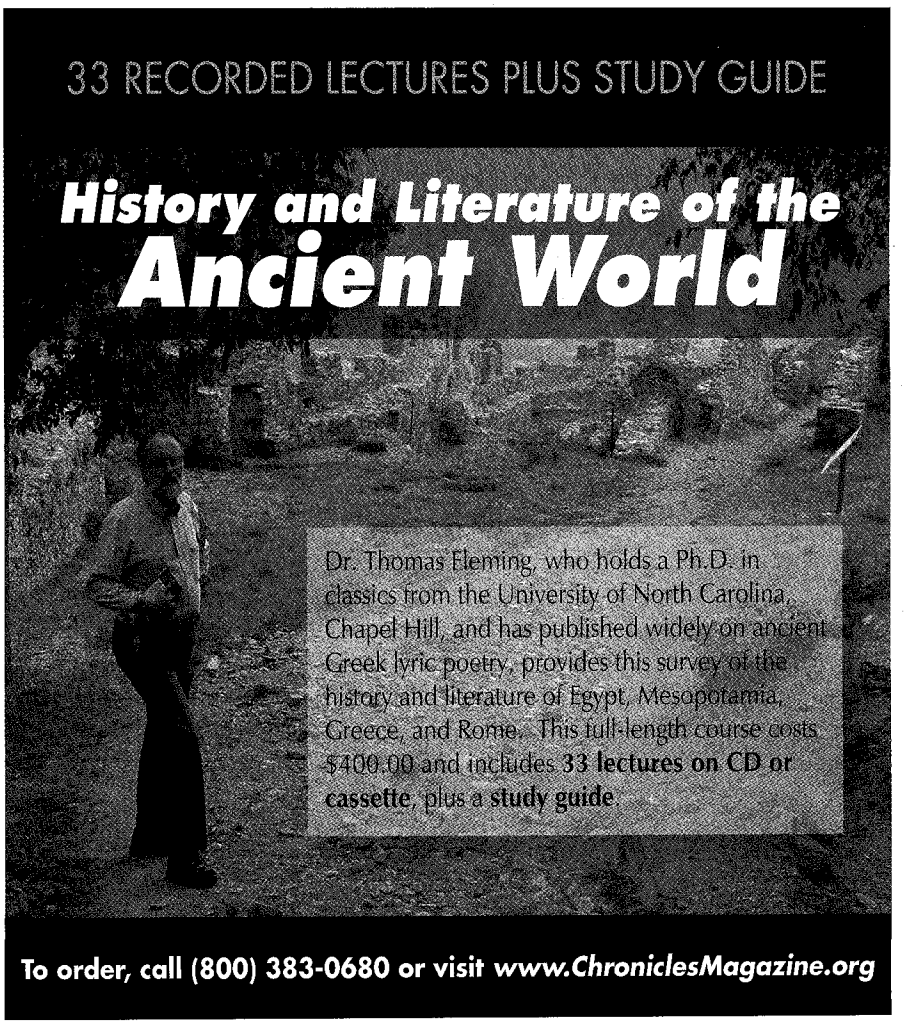
The only real challenge has come from the People's Orthodox Rally (LAOS). Georgios Karatzaferis, who formerly belonged to the conservative wing of New Democracy, founded LAOS in 2000; since then, it has continually grown. In the 2004 national elections, the party polled 2.2 percent, failing to capture the 3 percent necessary to enter parliament, but a few months later, it garnered 4.12 percent in the European elections, and Karatzaferis became a member of the European Parliament. In the 2007 national elections, it gained 3.8 percent of the vote and elected ten MPs, myself included.

To outside observers, 3.8 percent may seem small, but one must factor in the dirty tricks played by the liberal political establishment. LAOS party groups, members, and voters are subjected to a torrent of daily attacks, without any protection by the state. Adonis Georgiades, a newly elected LAOS MP, is a publisher specializing in the works of ancient Greek writers who operates a book shop in the center of Athens. His store has been set on fire nine times over the last two years, and the police have made not one arrest. In September 2007, unidentified men entered the annual Book Exhibition, a couple of hundred meters from the Acropolis, that ancient symbol of Athenian democracy, and proceeded to destroy the displays of conservative publishing houses. Again, the police arrested no one. Others have systematically attacked the LAOS party offices all over Greece, hurling Molotov cocktails and stones. No arrests. Despite this high level of harassment, which would be considered outrageous for any well-governed and democratic state, LAOS supporters have never retaliated with violence. Of course, the liberal politicians, journalists, and analysts have ignored this irenic response, as it conflicts with their insistence that LAOS is a dangerous "far-right party." Politics has jettisoned reason in contemporary Greece.

Nonetheless, the persistence of LAOS supporters is finally paying off. After the party entered the Hellenic Parliament, the new Karamanlis government was forced to abandon the introduction of new history textbooks that were hostile toward the Hellenic people and promoted an anti-Greek worldview. (For example, the Smyrna massacre of 100,000 Greeks in 1922 was termed the "Squeeze at the Harbor," while the 400-year Ottoman occupation of Greece and the rest of the Balkans fell under the heading "Ottoman Administration.") The new government has pledged that it will follow a more decisive policy toward the expansionist ambitions of Skopje, by prohibiting its entrance to NATO and the European Union, unless a mutually acceptable solution for the country's name can be reached. (Wary that the name implies a desire to expand into Greek Macedonia, Athens does not recognize the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.")

Formerly, the conservative agenda was filtered and distorted by the liberal media. Now, it can be heard plainly on the floor of Parliament. It should come as no surprise, then, that the first polls conducted after the elections showed an increase of support for LAOS. The game is not over in Greece.

Makis Voridis is a People's Orthodox Rally member of the Hellenic Parliament.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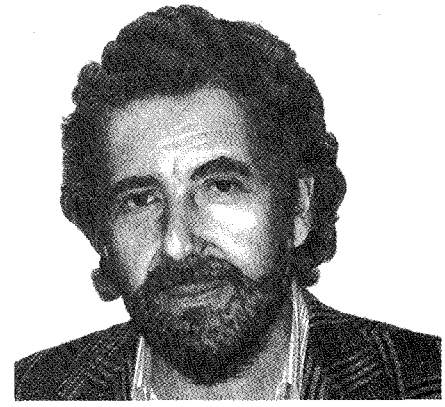
by Andrei Navrozov

Memoirs of a Bridegroom



If the typical life of a young couple resembles an Oriental bazaar, where the clamoring for jewels, perfumes, spices, silks, and other aphrodisiac appurtenances of *fata morgana* breaks on the morose tightfistedness of those who can afford them, in my case the reverse was true, not only because I could afford nothing, but because my fiancée's not clamoring for jewels and perfumes was symptomatic of the abnormality I had vowed to correct. The first problem was insoluble, and hence nothing to lose sleep over, but the other was a source of nightly torment.

In one of his essays Orwell calculated how many pairs of silk stockings were equivalent to the labor that went into the making of a bombing plane, but what concerned me was that the silk stockings my fiancée showed no signs of coveting cost the equivalent of 28 tins of Portuguese sardines. A silken folly from Cadolle in the Rue Cambon, likewise spurned at 3,000 francs, was equivalent to what I might get in a lucky week for a review in the *Times*. Finally, a ring with a sparkle lively enough to engage somebody, to say nothing of the fairy-tale solitaire clear enough to augur a cloudless ménage, was no more procurable, for all its being so callously unwanted, than any of the jewels on display in the Tower of London. But one fine day, fate intervened.

When we left New York, where some of her family dwelt in what to the bourgeois eye is palatial splendor, Kay had thrown away the letter of acceptance to an Ivy League university, a decisive gesture that was as scandalous as lighting a cigar with a winning lottery ticket. Ivy League universities played a massive role in the emergence of futurism as the newly dominant force in American culture; while protesting vociferously their obligation to keep at arm's length the vulgar consumerism of business, they quietly did their master's bidding. And so long as Harvard and Yale kept quiet, who could say that feminism, multiculturalism, or any of the other liberating mirages were only consumer trends? Thus purchased with the proverbial gold of silence, their influence was as great as that of any of the three branches of government, their prestige comparable to that of the Church in medieval Europe.

Hence, in the unanimous view of the entire diaspora of Kay's family, hers was an act of something more insidious than momentary madness. It was like Sartre rubbishing the Nobel Prize. That this was consequent on her having taken up with a foreign loafer had not been lost on them, of course. The name Svengali had been dropped a few times, along with such words of foreign extraction as *hypnosis*, *guru*, and *goy*. Many members of the family were Jewish, or seemed to be when it suited them. As to the question of race, it was with aplomb graduating to fierceness that they described themselves as American.

A leading firm of private detectives had been retained to establish whether the loafer was benign or vicious—whether his manifest lack of means was a bee in a rich man's bonnet or actual evidence of bad character—and before long, the answer had come back loud and clear. The girl was on the wrong track, willful and heedless, and would need to be taught a lesson.

Now penury, by virtue of its being the punishment they had heard most about since childhood, was the only one whose mechanics they thought they really understood. Teaching someone a lesson meant depriving the culprit of money. But since they hadn't been supporting Kay in the first place, money would need to be given her so it could later be taken away. And for this to happen a suitable excuse was required, such as a wedding.

Fate seemed to be playing into our hands, though it would be long before the game of cross purposes posted a score in dollars and cents. Kay had applied to Cambridge and was accepted as an undergraduate by one of the colleges. This news almost wrecked everything. Now the name of Cambridge, as ominous in its way as Oxford—or Knout, or Zeitgeist, or Montparnasse—clothed her in its authority and sanctioned her past and future misconduct. What had been merely an isolated outbreak of recusance now seemed to have all the logistical wherewithal of a *coup d'état* staged with the aid of a foreign power.

The family's position was not to be envied. They knew they would have to send Kay to Cambridge, because denying the young the opportunity to better themselves through institutions of higher learning was a dangerous move to contemplate. Quite apart from the university fees, this meant paying for Kay's life abroad, for her life with me, and for all my pleasure which would one day be hers.

And there was the simmering insurgency to deal with, devious foreigners and dark forces of reaction, and the injection of the money that somehow had to be administered with Machiavellian precision before it could be withdrawn to devastating effect. Thus, like some rowdy pink-cheeked Hegelian in a university beer-cellar brawl, fate had got the American family in a dialectical viselike grip, and it was now only a matter of time before the silk stockings, the whisper of French lace labeled *Cadolle, rue Cambon 14*, and the fairy-tale solitaire clear enough to suggest a cloudless union would be mine, all mine. I mean hers, all hers. A slip of the tongue, really. ◁

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Waiting for the Big One

The global economy is like the St. Andreas Fault. You know that a terminal disaster is inevitable, but you keep your fingers crossed and try not to think about it. When a tremor occurs, you often fear it could be the Big One and sometimes panic, but then, when the dust settles, you sigh with relief to find yourself alive and the Golden State still above the ocean.

In the last week of January, the world had a major tremor that, at first, looked like the Big One. In two frantic days, America's economic woes suddenly spread across the oceans and infected Asia and then, within hours, Europe. The news that losses from America's subprime home-loans crisis were costing Chinese banks some untold billions triggered a massive sell-off in Asia. On January 21, in Tokyo, the Nikkei had its worst two-day drop in 17 years. The following day, Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost a tenth of its value, with similar losses posted in Singapore, India, Taiwan, South Korea, and Australia.

As the major Asian indices officially entered a bear market, the panic swiftly gripped Europe. More than $150 billion was wiped off the value of Britain's stock market on January 21, with the FTSE 100 Index posting its steepest fall on record. The combined losses of the London, Paris, and Frankfurt markets alone amounted to more than $350 billion—the precise equivalent of Mr. Bush's 2003 major tax cut that was meant to stimulate demand and encourage growth. His latest stimulus package, announced on January 23, was less than half that amount—$145 billion—and analysts immediately said that it was far too little too late.

The effect of America's woes in Europe and Asia refuted the theory—known as decoupling—that they are not as dependent on the American economy as they once were, in part because they trade more with one another. No market has escaped the carnage caused by America's subprime crisis, and the fear of worse news to come is turning into panic.

That panic abated by the end of the week, after the Federal Reserve intervened with a dramatic three quarters of a percentage-point cut in interest rates and U.S. employment figures proved better than expected. Most markets ended up roughly where they started. The world did not come to an end—but the Fault remains. The fiscal imbalances caused by President Bush's addiction to deficit spending, by overindebtedness, by ordinary Americans' negligible savings, by the huge and growing foreign debt, and by the falling dollar are all still there.

For the time being, the United States is able to issue and sell large quantities of low-cost debt, denominated in dollars, through Treasury bonds. Right now, they yield less than the inflation rate, but as long as much of the world's oil continues to be traded mainly in dollars, central banks around the world have to keep holding substantial dollar reserves. Furthermore, to the extent that the OPEC cartel raises oil prices to capture the dollar's constantly falling purchasing power *vis-à-vis* the euro—rather than simply because of chronic excess demand for oil as it peaks—it imposes on Europe the burden of sharing that part of the oil price hike that follows the falling dollar. This, paradoxically, creates additional built-in support for the dollar, without which its current sickness could have been well nigh terminal. Other countries' dollar reserves are still invested in American assets, creating an artificial capital-accounts boost for the U.S. economy.

When the "petro-euro" becomes reality, the global demand for dollars will collapse; the exchange rate will then likely fluctuate between two and three dollars per euro. The consequences for the global economy will be scary at first, painful in the medium, but beneficial in the long term. For the United States, however, they will be traumatic. World trade will cease being a scheme in which Washington prints dollars and the rest of the world produces things that dollars can buy. The U.S. economy will no longer enjoy the benefits of a gigantic subsidy provided by the goods and services of countries holding their reserves in dollars—notably, by Japan, who imports four fifths of her oil from the Middle East. The fewer dollars circulating outside the United States will then translate into fewer goods and services that this country can obtain from abroad on what amounts to interest-free credit. The current-account deficit—at present, $800 billion—will no longer be financed by foreign capital, because its influx would simply cease. Global demand for shares of U.S. companies and Treasury bonds will collapse. Without foreign investors, interest rates will zoom into double digits, and the Fed will find inflationary pressures simply irresistible.

In Washington, the threat is still regarded as somewhat remote, because a further significant decline in the value of the dollar would hurt major oil producers. The Saudis cannot afford to see the value of their U.S. currency reserves and Treasury bonds depleted, the argument goes, and the resulting economic downturn would be felt around the world and would hurt Saudi oil revenues by reducing demand.

That argument no longer holds. Whatever an oil sheikh can get for dollars, he can get for euros—and his euro reserves are looking safer with each

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passing day. The Eurozone does not run a huge trade deficit. It is not heavily indebted to the rest of the world, and it is not subject to the political will of a single national decisionmaking structure. Europe is the Middle East's biggest trading partner; it imports more oil and petroleum derivatives than the United States; and it has a bigger share of global trade.

For too long, Americans have assumed that they could maintain effortless prosperity by investing in assets that produce no profits—dot-coms in the late 1990's, followed by housing—and then using them to generate spending cash. Instead of helping America sober up, the Federal Reserve merely postponed the Big One by cutting rates on January 23. More affordable liquidity, as it happens, is no cure for a credit crisis prompted by years of excess liquidity. The underlying financial malaise is still there. The Fed has saved the market, albeit temporarily, at the expense of the economy.

At the technical level, the extreme volatility of the markets makes it imperative to prevent a misuse of the sophisticated technology that allows the fully automated and therefore anonymous system to function. Such misuse for personal gain—like the case of the French rogue trader Jérôme Kerviel—would be a matter for the SEC and the courts. Far more dangerous is the potential abuse of the system by our global enemies; and it is not unthinkable.

On the last day of 2007, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) quietly approved Bourse Dubai's purchase of 20 percent of NASDAQ. At best, this means that unsupervised foreign firms may now manipulate U.S. company stocks, adversely affecting domestic markets. At worst, Bourse Dubai could be true to its self-avowed status as "the world's first and leading Islamic securities exchange" and exert its influence accordingly. If a single rogue trader could cost Société Générale over seven billion dollars and contribute to the brief global panic, what could happen if the market infrastructure itself were to fall into the hands of rogue controllers?

While nominally the paragon of Arabs striving for modernity, Dubai and the rest of the Emirates are inhabited by people similar to their Arab-Muslim brethren elsewhere, yet disproportionately inclined to Islamic terrorism. Two of the one million UAE citizens were among the September 11 terrorists. UAE's banking system helped to move the funds needed for the operation. In addition, the UAE has been a key transfer point for illegal shipments of nuclear components to Iran and North Korea. Entrusting the running of America's stock exchanges to a company owned by them is as inherently unsafe as letting them operate America's ports.

Keeping the markets safe from jihadist mischief is necessary. It will not save them in the long term, however, because the malaise is moral and spiritual. Just like under San Andreas, the plates move past each other, producing cumulative strain. The Fault that will produce the global meltdown is the gap between the postmodern heart and mind, the impossibility of ever consuming enough goods and services to feel sated, and the unwillingness to settle the bill for those goods and services in cash. When mere servicing of the ever-growing tab leaves nothing for further consumption, however, the end will be nigh:

> The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes anymore—cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and perils; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men (Revelation 18:11–13).

If reasonable men agree that our civilization is spiritually diseased, morally rotten, and demographically moribund, then a colossal, rapidly spreading global economic crisis should be neither feared nor wished away. It may yet be our last best hope for survival.

The meltdown has to be rapid and brutal, however. Only the collapse of *hoi polloi* confidence in the ability of the all-pervasive State to manage relief would force blighted billions to reexamine their lives and their assumptions. By getting no relief from the collapsing State (including the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF, and Oxfam), they would rediscover self-reliance—or die. Being disillusioned by progress, they would rediscover the value and force of tradition. The ensuing struggle for diminishing resources may make them drop the neurotic *becoming* in favor of just *being*—that is, surviving. The Hobbesian mayhem in New Orleans after Katrina offered a glimpse of what is to come.

A predictable benefit for the survivors would be the return of fertility to historically normal levels. Even in darkest Tuscany or the Upper East Side, children would no longer be seen as a burden, an obstacle to self-fulfilment, and a financial liability. In the aftermath of the burst bubble, they would regain their traditional value as economic assets and the long-term substitute for collapsed welfare programs, entitlements, and pension systems. The family would reemerge as the essential social unit. Amid collapsing political structures, all ideological "propositions" would be recognized as empty abstractions. Communities linked to their native soil and bonded by kinship, memory, language, faith, and myth would be revived. And in adversity, the eyes of men would be lifted, once again, to Heaven.

We do not know when this will happen, just as we don't know when San Francisco will turn into rubble; but when it happens—and it will happen—the American interest demands that it takes the form of a short, sharp shock, utterly unmanageable by the ruling political and economic elite that is destroying us.

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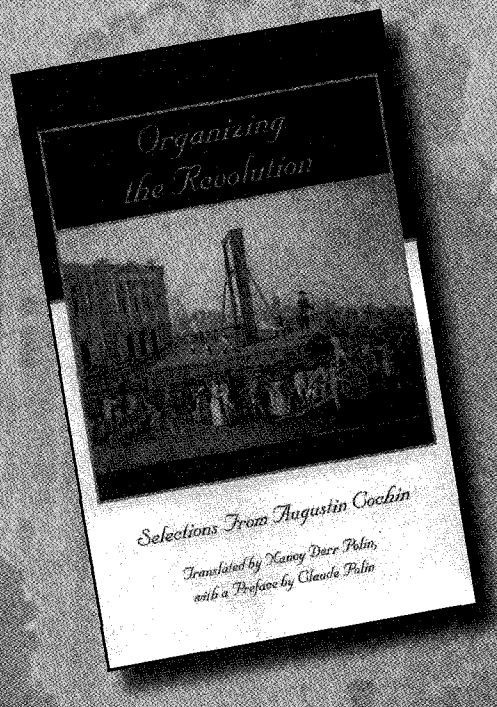
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But that is not how James DeWolf thought of the matter. DeWolf was an "anti-slavery" senator from Rhode Island, opposed to admitting Missouri as a slave state. He had been a slave trader before the trade was outlawed in 1808. His family company ran over 80 voyages to Africa and sold slaves throughout the Western Hemisphere. DeWolf never had an "Amazing Grace" conversion. But if his "anti-slavery" position had no moral content, what was its meaning?

We will explore the main Northern anti-slavery critiques as they appeared in the Philadelphia Convention, the Louisiana Purchase, New England nullification of the War of 1812, the Abolition Petitions, the Missouri Compromise, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the agitation over allowing slavery in the West. To what extent did this agitation have as its object a moral concern to emancipate and incorporate the African population into the American polity, and to what extent did it display quite different motives and objectives?

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FOREIGN POLICY

Sudan, Ethiopia, and the American Empire

by Joseph E. Fallon

Sudan and Ethiopia are neighboring countries that are both ruled by authoritarian regimes; each is engaged in a brutal counterinsurgency operation against rebel forces—the former, in Darfur; the latter, in Ogaden. Curiously, these countries are treated quite differently by Washington; and this difference reveals a great deal about the current *modus operandi* of the American Empire.

In Darfur, war erupted in 2003. The rebels initially consisted of two groups: the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA), originally called the Darfur Liberation Front, supported by Eritrea; and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), thought to be receiving aid from Chad as well as Eritrea. Each rebel group has since split into several factions. The result is a kaleidoscopic war pitting Muslim against Muslim, Arab against African, black against black, ethnic group against ethnic group, tribe against tribe, and agriculturalist against nomad. An estimated 200,000 people have died, while another two million have been made refugees.

The response of the U.S. government has been to accuse Sudan of "genocide" in Darfur, to support a U.N. resolution calling Sudan's actions there "crimes against humanity," to demand that Khartoum agree to the deployment of a foreign peacekeeping force of up to 26,000 troops in Darfur and allow the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations unfettered access to the region, and to expand U.S. sanctions on Sudan.

In June 2007, Ethiopia launched a war in Ogaden against ethnic Somali rebels who call themselves the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and are also backed by Eritrea. Many have described the situation in Ethiopia as similar to what is occurring in Darfur. While a U.N. team was permitted by Addis Ababa to visit Ogaden to investigate charges of Ethiopian atrocities, its findings were never released. In the meantime, human-rights groups, the Red Cross, Medicins Sans Frontieres, and independent journalists have been barred or expelled from the region.

Washington's response has been to support Ethiopia, dismissing stories of atrocities by government troops as rebel propaganda. The Bush administration continues to support the Addis Ababa regime. The White House has not withdrawn one penny of its yearly gift of approximately half a billion dollars in foreign aid and continues to arm and train its military, the largest in Africa; and the Bush administration has declared Ethiopia eligible for the Excess Defense Articles program, which provides the regime with used American weapons and equipment free or at reduced prices.

Why the official outrage over Darfur, but not over Ogaden? There are three reasons: Islam, oil, and China.

Empires have often been established by governments in response to a perceived threat to a country's security. The threat, real or imagined, is used to justify increased military spending, the establishment of overseas bases, and foreign interventions (political or military, directly or by proxy). If a threat can be depicted as a totalitarian ideology with millions of supporters, such policies can be implemented quickly and with little domestic opposition. The right to security becomes a right to control as many states or regions and their natural resources as possible. The Cold War is one example. Since September 11, the Bush administration has been seeking to emulate that example, claiming it is fighting a world war against "Islamic fundamentalism." Islam has replaced the Soviet Bloc as the existential threat to America.

The goal of this "War on Terror," publicly acknowledged by neoconservative supporters of the Bush administration, is to ensure that the United States remains the world's hegemonic power for the 21st century. Maintaining this empire can only succeed if Washington accomplishes three tasks.

First, and most important, it must control the oil and gas resources of the Middle East and Central Asia—the source as well as the existing and planned distribution pipelines, including the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, South Caucasus, Trans-Caspian Gas, and Trans-Afghanistan pipelines. This will enable Washington to exert political pressure on rivals and hesitant allies whose economies are dependent on this oil and gas—China, Europe, India, and Japan. At the same time, the United States will be able to undermine Russia's economy and her international influence by reducing Moscow's share of the Eurasian petroleum-export market. This is the strategy advocated in 1997 by Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security advisor. Though Brzezinski opposed the neocons, this policy, outlined in his book *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, helped to formulate their current strategy.

Second, to exploit these resources efficiently, the United States must orchestrate "regime change"—*i.e.*, install pro-American regimes—in Muslim countries. According to Gen. Wesley Clark in his book *Winning Modern Wars,* in addition to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran, the Bush administration is targeting Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia and Sudan for such regime change.

Third, *regime change* is a euphemism for the imperial dictum "divide and rule." For neoconservatives such as Richard Perle, Michael Ledeen, and Max Boot, regime change means fragmenting Muslim countries, such as

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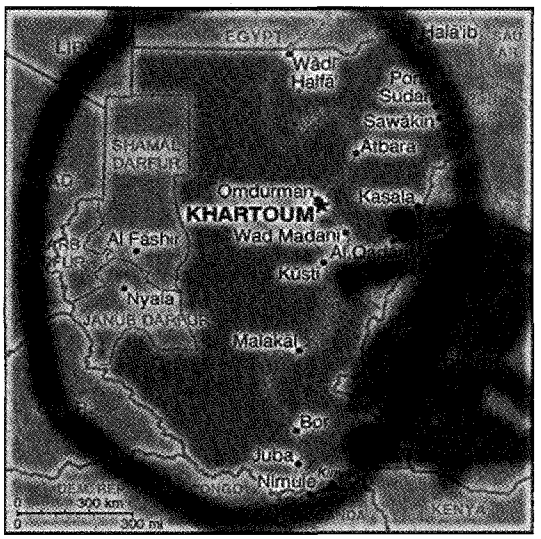

Iran and Saudi Arabia, into two or more separate states. Its most outspoken advocate, Ralph Peters, calls for redrawing the borders of virtually every Muslim country in the Middle East. The ethnic and racial balkanization of Islam, at least on a limited scale, appears to be part of the Bush administration's foreign-policy agenda.

The politics of oil, regime change, and balkanization is the template applied by the Bush administration to Sudan. Sudan is the largest country in Africa and the most important one in the Sahel, a band of countries stretching across the width of the continent located south of the Arabs and north of Nigeria. Sudan is also the tenth-largest country in the world, covering an area roughly the size of Western Europe and with a fraction of the population. Strategically located south of Egypt and west of Saudi Arabia, she borders Libya, Central Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Red Sea. She controls a vast stretch of the Nile, but, most importantly, Sudan has oil, discovered in the south of the country by Chevron in the 1970's.

In the Cold War, the United States and Israel supported southern Sudanese secessionists—first, the Anya-Nya; then, the Sudan People's Liberation Army—in hopes of overthrowing an African government considered an enemy of Israel and a friend of the Soviet Union. However, the U.N. military suppression of the attempt by Katanga to secede from the Congo dissuaded Washington from seeking to partition the Sudan—at that time. Regime change was sufficient.

With American and Israeli backing, southerners, who are culturally, linguistically, and religiously different from people in the Arabized North, fought two civil wars against the government of Sudan to secure independence. The first lasted from 1955 to 1972 and ended with the Addis Ababa peace agreement. Under its terms, the south was granted a large degree of political and cultural autonomy within a united Sudan.

The peace ended in 1983 when Khartoum attempted to undermine the political autonomy of the south and then sought to impose *sharia* (Islamic law) on southerners. A second civil war ensued, which lasted until 2005. It is estimated that, between 1955 and 2005, nearly two million south Sudanese died, and another four million were made refugees.

When the second civil war broke out, Washington again aided the secessionists. There were four phases to this policy, which reflected the motivations of four presidents. Ronald Reagan continued the traditional Cold War U.S. foreign policy. George H.W. Bush sought to punish Khartoum for refusing to support his Gulf War. Bill Clinton wanted to curb Khartoum's sponsorship of terrorism. President George W. Bush is attempting to demonstrate to the Islamic militants what Washington can do to any Muslim state that meets with its disapproval: impose economic sanctions and political partition.

If her southern petroleum reserves are sufficiently developed, Sudan could become a major oil-producing country. The principal beneficiary, however, would be China, thanks to Executive Order 13067. In 1997, claiming Khartoum was harboring Islamic terrorists, persecuting Christians, and destabilizing neighboring states, the Clinton administration imposed a trade embargo on Sudan. U.S. businesses were prohibited from investing in Sudan's oil industry. This disengagement resulted in the emergence of China as Sudan's principal foreign investor. China now operates major oil concessions in the country.

If southern Sudan were to become an independent state, it would be the major oil-producing country in that region. And it would be non-Muslim and pro-American.

This would be a major "victory" for the Bush administration's War on Terror. The U.S. government would have stripped the largest Arab state, and one of the largest Muslim countries in Africa, of more than one third of her territory and most of her petroleum reserves.

In January 2005, the Bush administration engineered a peace agreement between the war-weary adversaries, which established the necessary framework. Under its terms, Washington achieves three short-term objectives: a north-south partition of Sudan after six years; the resumption of U.S. oil operations in the country, which will likely lead to a U.S. monopolization of southern Sudan's oil reserves; and the subsequent displacement of China from Sudan's oil industry, ensuring that Beijing's economy and military remain dependent on foreign oil companies—particularly those of the United States and her allies.

The long-term goal appears to be a further fragmentation of Sudan. This would serve as both a demonstration of Washington's power and a preview of what Iran—and Pakistan, should Islamic radicals take over in the wake of Bhutto's assassination—can expect. The crisis in Darfur provides the Bush administration with a pretext, allowing Washington to exploit ethnic, tribal, and racial conflicts among Muslims to precipitate the breakup of a Muslim state. Moreover, if Khartoum agrees to the stationing of 26,000 foreign troops in Darfur, the region effectively becomes an independent state. After that, the same scenario would likely be repeated in Kordofan, the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile, the Red Sea, and the Kassala provinces—all of which have grievances against the central government. If Khartoum refuses, rebels will receive enough arms and aid to reduce Sudan to the level of Somalia, with a *de facto* partition of the country among rival warlords.

Meanwhile, Christian Ethiopia, a

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traditional U.S. ally, has been elevated by Washington to the rank of a subimperial power. During the Cold War, Addis Ababa backed the U.S.-supported southern Sudanese secessionists but did not militarily intervene on their behalf. Such restraint was abandoned at the close of 2006, when Ethiopia, with Washington's approval, invaded and occupied Somalia, yet another Muslim country the Bush administration deems an enemy of the United States. Ethiopia now serves as a U.S. proxy army in the Horn of Africa. In return, Washington will preserve Ethiopia's status as the dominant military power in East Africa.

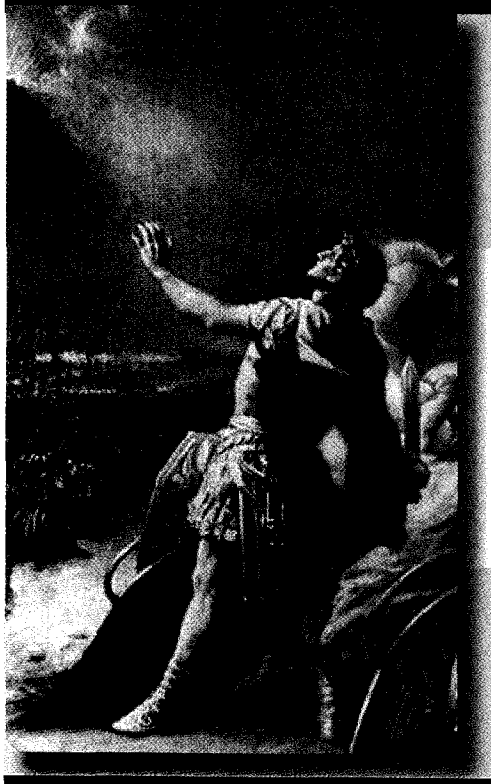
The occupation of Somalia has provoked Muslim insurgencies inside that country and in Ethiopia's adjacent Somali-inhabited Ogaden. These uprisings have frustrated the U.S. goal of suppressing Islamic militants among Somalis and imposing a compliant, pro-American regime upon Somalia. Both Addis Ababa and the Bush administration accuse Eritrea of being behind these rebellions, providing rebels with arms, funds, training, and sanctuary. Ethiopia has now deployed 100,000 troops to the Eritrean border and is likely to attack that country by the end of the year. Her pretext will be a border dispute. (International arbitrators ruled in favor of Eritrea, but Ethiopia refuses to accept their verdict.) Behind this is the greater goal of implementing the Bush administration's agenda of overthrowing the Eritrean government.

The Ethiopian military is already fighting at least three wars: a foreign war in Somalia, and two major domestic insurgencies—one against Somalis in Ogaden, and another against the Oromo, who are the largest ethnic group in the country and occupy nearly a third of its territory. A fourth war may very well be the breaking point for the overextended Ethiopian army, causing either a military defeat (and demoralization) or intense frustration from fighting a protracted guerrilla war. Without a loyal army, the pro-American regime in Addis Ababa will fall.

This illustrates the dysfunction of the American Empire. It promotes instability in select Muslim countries such as Sudan, claiming this will enhance the security of the United States. The opposite is true: Chessboard foreign policy only increases anti-Americanism and support for Islamic militants among Muslims worldwide, as numerous opinion polls throughout the Muslim world confirm. The U.S. government rewards Third World regimes, such as Ethiopia's, that participate in its War on Terror. Washington's embrace can be fatal, however. Such alliances often alienate significant portions of the populations in those countries, which, in turn, undermines the stability of pro-American regimes that rule them. Yet the Bush administration continues to pursue this self-defeating policy. Doing the same thing over and over again, while expecting a different outcome, is a mark of insanity.

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.

THE CHRISTIAN AGE: Themes in Medieval History



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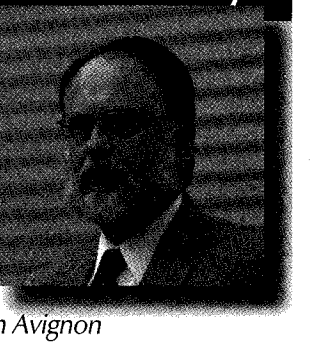

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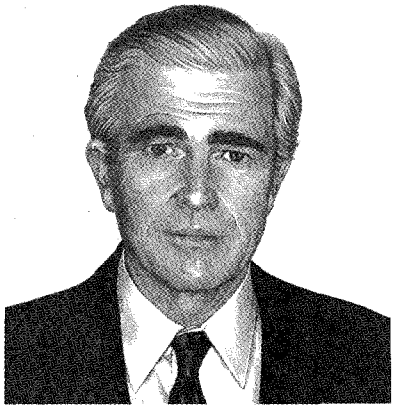
Marxist Obsessions



There Will Be Blood
Produced and distributed by Miramax Films
Directed and written by Paul Thomas Anderson

Many American film reviewers must labor under the spell of Marxist sentimentality. It's as though they have never recovered from their undergraduate viewing of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Sergei Eisenstein's clever but facile Soviet-propaganda film. Not surprisingly, whenever left-wing politics show up on screen, they grow hopelessly nostalgic. How else to explain their near-unanimous canonization of director Paul Thomas Anderson's *There Will Be Blood*, a botched adaptation of Upton Sinclair's 1927 socialist novel *Oil!*? Reading their notices, I began to wonder if the film had left the poor scribblers ideologically befogged. Most seem to have surrendered their judgment and unashamedly cribbed the language in the studio's press kit—"epic" being most frequently invoked, followed by comparisons with *Citizen Kane* and *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*.

But this film is not an epic. It has neither the historical scope nor the social depth to qualify for even the loosest sense of the word. And, unlike Orson Welles' and John Huston's peerless films—which, lest anyone think I'm allowing my politics to cloud my aesthetic judgment, are also thoroughly left-wing projects—Anderson's film is an incoherent, unfinished psychodrama with occasional flashes of brilliance. The press notes tell us that it is "loosely" based on Sinclair's novel. This is p.r.-speak. The film has almost nothing to do with its source. Instead of Sinclair's expansive depiction of California high-stakes wheeling and dealing in the first decades of the 20th century, Anderson pits two American madmen against each other—one, a pitiless capitalist; the other, a religious huckster. Their battle is meant to represent the murderous consequences of the greed unleashed by America's addictions to secular and sacred entrepreneurship. Critics have accepted the film's largely undramatized thesis that capitalism and religion have been equally ruinous of what might have been a more brotherly ethos in our land. Perhaps Anderson had in mind the political culture that flourished so beneficently in the formerly Marxist states of the last century. Well, certainly, capitalism and religion have inflicted their share of crimes on the masses, but their infractions pale when compared with the oppressive and murderous policies systematically enforced by Marxist governments.

I suppose Miramax has dubbed the film an epic because it invokes not only Sinclair but the Bible. Or is it Anderson's epic-size ambition they have in mind? The title comes from Exodus 7:19, in which the Lord commands Moses to stretch forth his rod over the waters of Egypt, "that there may be blood throughout the land." This is the first of the Ten Plagues designed to goad Pharaoh into freeing the Jews. The relevance of this allusion is a bit obscure, but I suppose Anderson means that America is the new Egypt, afflicted figuratively and literally with the plague of a blood-letting capitalism.

Given the cautionary reference, you'd think Anderson would have examined the workings of the detested economic system in some detail, but, curiously, he doesn't. Instead, he focuses on the oilman and the preacher, often to the exclusion of the novel's fuller portrayal of their surrounding community and its economy. In fact, he has rewritten the novel so that the resulting narrative barely reflects the original. His primary characters are monsters driven by their sociopathic obsessions to succeed at all costs. This was not Sinclair's purpose at all.

As a committed socialist, Sinclair was less interested in individual neurosis and criminality than in the American economic system, which his novels and essays portray as inherently unjust. His wealthy characters are generally not evil. They just cannot see beyond their bourgeois assumptions. As such, they are not fully responsible for the iniquities they blindly visit on the less privileged. In the opening pages of *Oil!*, his protagonist, J. Arnold Ross (whom Anderson has archly rechristened Plainview), drives along an early concrete highway. The highway is so narrow that approaching cars can barely pass and have no choice but to trust each other's skill to negotiate the few inches of clearance provided them. Ross has taken his son Bunny along for the drive, and the boy thrills at each of these near misses as much as he would if he were on an amusement-park ride. The episode constitutes Sinclair's clever metaphor for unfettered capitalist competition. It does not seem to occur to Ross and the other drivers that some authority—a socialist government, for instance—should intervene to protect them from their potential recklessness. Instead of demanding that the road be widened, Ross contents himself with calling inconsiderate drivers "road hogs." This is Sinclair's version of the free market, a childish competition in which participants are left to run the risk of devastating collision at every turn.

Anderson's dour film admits no such scene. In his dealings, Plain-

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view (Daniel Day-Lewis) deliberately encroaches on others, ferociously determined to refuse them any more quarter than he absolutely must. His idea is to crowd others off the road if he can. And why not? "There are times," he explains, "when I look at people and I see nothing worth liking. I want to earn enough money that I can get away from everyone." Armed with such cynicism, he is not surprised when a young man named Paul Sunday (Paul Dano) offers to sell him information about the oil underneath the Sunday family farm without informing his father. Ignoring the implicit betrayal of the offer, Plainview tries to bargain the price down, as any good capitalist would. Later, he offers Paul's father, Abel, $3,700 for his house. But Abel's other son, Eli (also Paul Dano), points out that there's oil on the property and demands another $10,000. Eli is a faith healer and wants the money to build a church for his congregation. Plainview is visibly put out by Eli's demand, and you can hardly blame him. It's not just the expense. Since Dano plays both Eli and Paul, the brothers are indistinguishable. This leaves Plainview—and the audience—to wonder if the two characters are twins or the same scheming young man playing him for a fool. Anderson doesn't let on until he throws us a sort of ambiguous bone at the film's alternately hilarious and gruesome conclusion.

Anderson offers us another puzzle. We are led to believe that Plainview is cheating the Sundays, but the offer of $3,700 for their small, deteriorating farmhouse would have been a princely sum in 1911, when far more substantial houses were going for half this amount. And, as Plainview points out to Eli, there's no guarantee that he will find a workable oil reservoir, and searching for it will cost him greatly in equipment and time. Yet Day-Lewis's performance suggests Plainview is robbing the Sundays. He must be. He's a capitalist, after all.

Soon, Plainview goes about buying up the other farms in the area. This process is sketched in with a few scenes—some of them, vividly compelling; others, vague and unconvincing. Then, a Standard Oil agent offers Plainview a million dollars for his oilfield. In a fit of wholly unexpected lunacy, he threatens to come to the man's home at night and cut his throat, should he persist in trying to drive him out of business. Anderson then jumps from 1911 to 1927, leaving out the story of Plainview's ascent to megalomaniacal billionaire. We are to infer that his efforts drove him mad, but we do not see how or why. Instead, Anderson shows us Plainview sleeping in one of the lanes of his mansion's indoor bowling alley, surrounded by empty wine bottles. That's capitalist decadence for you, and, apparently, it's all we need to know.

It is here that Plainview has his final showdown with Eli, who in some unexplained way has made his own fortune and is now in danger of losing it. Sinclair based Eli on Aimee Semple McPherson, the commercially successful evangelist of the 1920's who made her fortune by transforming preaching into show business. A forward thinker, she anticipated today's televangelists by taking profitably to the radio airwaves. Sinclair went to town with this material. Oddly, Anderson has ignored it, choosing to focus on Plainview and Eli as natural antagonists. Why should they hate each other? In their mutual contempt for the little guy, they would seem to be natural allies. Anderson does not explain.

Although Anderson's film is an inchoate mess, it does have one continuing focus: betrayal between brothers. This he signals by naming Eli's timid father Abel, the original fraternal victim. Then, we have the mystery of Paul and Eli echoed by the fractious relationship between Plainview and his long-lost brother. Finally, Eli tries to snooker the oil magnate by appealing to their shared spiritual brotherhood. It's a corollary of Marxist theory that capitalist competition fosters literal and figurative fratricide by encouraging exploitation and even murder of one's fellow man. But Anderson doesn't earn his theme; he merely asserts it. Indeed, capitalism has sometimes promoted vicious business practices, but to portray this convincingly, a filmmaker should illustrate with instances. Certainly, the directors Anderson invokes—Welles and Huston—did.

Despite its failings, *Blood* is worth seeing, if only for Day-Lewis. He has created a spectacular caricature of the possessed capitalist. Sounding like John Huston giving one of his smarmy performances, he has the voice of a born manipulator, breathy and rumbling with oddly placed drawls and pauses. At one point, he tells his brother he sees "the worst in people. . . . To have you here gives me a second breath. I can't keep doing this on my own with these . . . people." The "these" that precedes "people" is hissed, and the improbably long pause that follows makes "people" seem as if he had been searching for some more appropriate term of obloquy to apply to the cretinous bipeds with whom he must deal. I don't know whether Anderson meant it as such, but it's a marvelously comic moment. Day-Lewis's performance may be a stunt, but it's a fascinating one. It reminded me not only of Huston's vocal mannerisms but of Humphrey Bogart playing the mad gold prospector Fred C. Dobbs in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, Huston's adaptation of B. Traven's Marxist novel. Like Bogart's Dobbs, Plainview descends into greed-induced paranoia, and, as he does, he takes to muttering his suspicions to himself, limping about his oilfield like a coiled, gimlet-eyed demon, shuttered up in his perverse hatred for others.

By making Plainview such a magnificent monster, Day-Lewis has also made *Blood* a film worth watching, despite its half-baked political intentions.

Taki's TOP DRAWER
An online magazine of politics and culture
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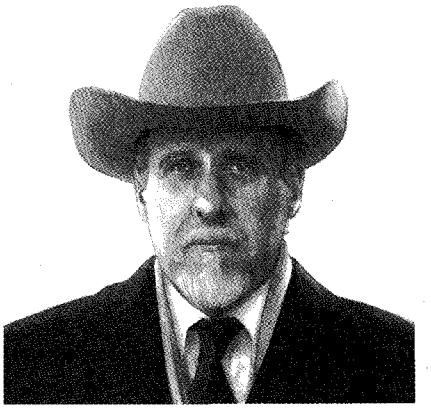
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Cupid's Thunderbolt



In the weeks immediately following the encounter with the illegal immigrants in the *arroyo*, Jesús "Eddie" and Héctor were men possessed by a single idea, though not the same one. Jesús could think only of joining up with the recently formed Critter Company, based in El Paso but with a chapter in Deming, and fighting Islamists at the border. As for Héctor, his sole, overwhelming thought was to get home to Belen with his family, far away from the bewitching siren at the Pink House in Las Palomas.

Never in twenty-something years of married life had he been tempted by another woman—until now. Héctor tried to assure himself that his desire for Jacinta Ruiz was entirely normal, because it was completely natural. Adultery is as American as apple pie, and just as healthy; indeed, it is positively pro-American, as anyone who watches TV and reads *People* at the barbershop or on the checkout line at the supermarket knows. And yet, for some reason he couldn't fathom, he was unable to acknowledge that yielding to his male instincts by cheating on AveMaría was acceptable behavior. In what he clearly recognized to be a failure of imagination and nerve, Héctor blamed himself. Had he come to the United States as a child, perhaps he might be more completely acculturated to modern, progressive American ways. As it was, the notion of infidelity stuck in his craw like a beer-can poptop in a magpie's gullet, except for when he sat drinking with Jesús "Eddie" in the Pink House bar, waiting for his friend to visit the toilet and leave him alone with Jacinta for three precious minutes—which was why, every time, he attempted to talk Jesús "Eddie" into driving to Deming instead. In these efforts, he regularly failed, and this failure Héctor also blamed on himself. Obviously, he wasn't being very persuasive, and he knew all too well the reason for that: When the time came for "a couple" of drinks after dinner, Héctor wished to be nowhere in the world but in the mesmerizing presence of Jacinta Ruiz.

In vain, he worked at firing Jesús "Eddie's" enthusiasm for the Critter Company to still greater heat, as a distraction from the cheap beer and attractive company at the Pink House. (Jesús, though not as smitten with the girl as Héctor was, had ceased digging him in the ribs and offering lewd encouragement to extramarital pleasures. Having for now given up on Contracepción after living under the same roof with her for weeks without eliciting the slightest sign of interest, his behavior in the presence of Jacinta and Héctor had become distinctly rivalrous.) But at this formative stage in their organization, the Critters met only twice a week, once at the chapter leader's home in Deming on Sunday evening, and again the following Saturday morning for military training at the border next to Pancho Villa State Park. The Critter Company was a new militia group, intended to compete with the Minutemen whom it considered unsound on the immigration issue for their unwillingness to raid across the international line onto Mexican soil. Its name was borrowed from Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest's celebrated Confederate cavalry, which the founder, a German-born American named Wolfgang Mitternacht from the Air Force base at Alamagordo, had read about in Shelby Foote's three-volume history of the Civil War. As none of the Critters, including Mitternacht, could ride a horse, the men were obliged to train on foot, though dressed in appropriately critterish garb in which they resembled Rendezvous reenactors on the upper Green River. The Critter Company's relaxed schedule left Jesús "Eddie" plenty of time for beer drinking at the Pink House, affording Héctor little room for maneuver and leaving him with the consoling thought that, anyhow, he never permitted himself the company of Jacinta Ruiz absent the presence of a chaperone. In the end, after hearing Jesús enthuse about the pleasures of hiking around in the wintertime desert with a heavy pack on his back and a pistol on his hip, Héctor himself joined the Critter Company, more to divert his mind from Jacinta than from the conviction that anybody, short of the 150,000 troops in Iraq, could do anything to control illegal immigration across the southwestern border. (Not even President Bush believed that.)

Héctor had always counted as one of the many advantages of early repatriation his avoidance of military service in either country in which he held citizenship. Now, in his forties, with a slight paunch and not what could be called in shape, he'd been apprehensive of the discipline militia training entailed. His first morning in the field, attempting to stand straight under the weight of the Jansport daypack on the hardpan desert floor with an icy wind slashing through his buckskin suit and whipping the leather fringes along his legs and arms while Wolfgang Mitternacht strode up and down bawling orders from under his pulled-down coonskin cap, Héctor was already regretting having signed up with the Critter Company. And why was it necessary to learn to salute, to make an about-face, to sound off, to assume formation, to march in step? This wasn't the Charge of the Light Brigade, was it? The Minutemen's routine amounted to sitting out in lawn chairs under umbrellas, drinking beer and panning the scrub

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across the border through binoculars—he'd seen as much with his own eyes over in Arizona. By lunchtime, he understood he'd made one of the bigger mistakes of his life. His throat was parched by the dry air, his lungs ached with the cold, and the pressing weight of the pack seemed to be telescoping his spine as if it were a portable fishing rod. Beside him, Jesús "Eddie" was blue in the face and looked to be on the verge of a heart attack. The twenty-five or thirty other Critters, too, were obviously done in.

At twelve noon precisely, General Mitternacht ordered them to fall out, and the exhausted men had already commenced staggering toward their pickup trucks when another, unfamiliar voice issued a countermanding order: "Hold it right there, dudes!" Héctor raised his head and saw, through reddened, wind-teared eyes, a group of tourists from Pancho Villa State Park aiming a battery of cameras at the Critter Company. Numbly, insensibly, he stumbled ahead anyhow on a zigzag course toward Jesús "Eddie's" Dodge.

"Who wants to go for beer at the Pink House?" one of the Critters called in a weak, breathless howl, like that of a gutshot coyote.

The Pink House! The words rang in Héctor's ears like alien sounds arriving from another dimension in space. The thing seemed impossible, yet it was a fact nevertheless: He hadn't had a single thought of Jacinta Ruiz, not one, in the three hours since the training exercises had begun at 9 A.M. And now, he found, he couldn't think of anything else—except cold beer.

The Critters, crowding through into the bar in full regalia (guns excepted), caused a considerable stir at the Pink House, where the male portion of Las Palomas's leisured class sat at drink, enjoying a peaceful Saturday afternoon. Héctor had a glimpse of Jacinta's startled face before the onslaught, and then of her nubile figure bending and swaying gracefully from the waist as she hastily pulled tables together. Wolfgang Mitternacht took a seat at the head of the company and sat with his hands on his knees, staring truculently about as if he would challenge someone to a sword duel. Héctor tried to catch Jacinta's eye, but she went off behind the bar for cocktail napkins, apparently without having recognized him.

Jacinta was called to the kitchen before she could return with the napkins and was away for some time. Mitternacht, instantly impatient, scowled and drummed with his fingers on the table. At last he reached around, seized a drunk-off beer mug from the table behind him, and began banging the wood with it while calling loudly for beer in a field-marshal voice. At the second vociferation, the Mexicans set down their bottles and stared, as conversation in the bar ceased. Héctor shrank into his seat, wishing he were less conspicuously dressed.

To his huge relief, Jacinta Ruiz returned at that moment from the kitchen with an order pad and pencil in hand.

"*¿Alguien me llamó?*" she asked politely.

Wolfgang Mitternacht gazed upon her with contempt.

"Speak English," he ordered abruptly.

But Héctor was fed up with the *tipo*, whether he was his military superior or not. "She doesn't have to speak English," he told him in a firm voice. "She's in her own country over here. This is Mexico, remember."

Mitternacht started as if he'd been shot, then glared at him.

"But all this"—he gestured inclusively with his hand—"all this belonged to America once!"

"No, it didn't," Héctor corrected. "It's the other way around." Apparently, the German educational system was as poor as the American one, he thought.

"*¡Héctor!*" It was Jacinta who spoke to him. "Why, it's you! I'd never have recognized you in that getup! Are you all supposed to be Apache? You must be shooting a movie or something!"

"We're the Critter Company!" Jesús "Eddie," speaking from farther down the table, sounded insulted. "Patrolling the border to keep the goddamn Is*lam*ists out of the Rio Abajo!"

"And Jesús too! I hate to tell you

guys, I haven't seen any Muslims come through here lately."

"We have!" Jesús "Eddie" informed her. "Just a week ago at night, driving home from here! Wearing them black burgers over their faces, and everything!"

"*Me acuerdo de eso.*" Jacinta's face was poker straight. "I was worried for you that evening. I have not forgotten a man who left here one night after many drinks and drove off the road into the *arroyo* to avoid hitting what he said was a *fantasma*."

General Mitternacht, recovered from his shock at the insubordination offered him, had recalled the more important thing.

"Beer!" he shouted, waving the empty mug in her face.

"You are *alemán*?" Jacinta inquired. "We see many of your people here, from Alamagordo and Fort Bliss. It seems they use el Norte to come across the border into México. But we *mexicanos* do not mind—so long as not too many come here, that is."

Héctor caught up with her just outside the bar, on her way to the kitchen to pick up an order.

"Jacinta," he said earnestly, "I am very sorry. That ma—that *patán*—who insulted you just now is not my friend. I owe you my deepest apologies. Please believe me when I say that I did not bring him or these others here—in fact, it was them who brought Jesús 'Eddie' and me!"

She was smiling at him now, which gave him immeasurable relief.

"I know. I have seen some of them, including the German, drinking here

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before. Only not dressed up, the way they are today."

Héctor discovered that he was shaking with emotion.

"I should have hit him for talking to you that way," he stammered.

Her kiss came as fast as a striking snake but honeyed rather than venomous, and full on the mouth. His arms were around her then, and he had the confused impression that she, not he, had placed them there. They held together for what felt to Héctor a measureless interval beyond time, before Jacinta released him suddenly and took a step backward.

"I must go now," she said in a low voice, "and take drinks out to your . . . friends. I will see you again very soon, Héctor?"

Héctor did not return to the bar right away. Instead, he went on to the men's room, where he washed his hands thoroughly with soap and water. Then he brushed his hair carefully with a pocket comb, tilting his head first at one angle and then another. He did this even though he hardly recognized the face staring back at him from the small mirror set into a gaudy Mexican frame, hand-painted and hand-carved from wood. In fact, he scarcely saw the face at all. Héctor Villa was in a state of shock.

He sat dazed while the Critters recounted for one another their training exploits and discussed the gear they would need for deployment. Having drunk his first chilled beer almost in a single swallow, he dawdled over the second until the frost disappeared from the outside of the bottle and the bubbles subsided within it. Héctor could not tell whether he had just experienced a resounding triumph or suffered a terrible defeat. Like Zerlina confronted by the amorous Don, he wanted to, and yet he didn't want to.

What he particularly failed to understand was why it was all such a big deal in the first place. Why, Héctor wondered, were men like this? Why couldn't they be content with just one woman? Why was it that kissing another woman, or a thousand women, seemed irresistibly desirable, when kissing her was no different, after all, from kissing your wife? It wasn't important, was it? Then why did he feel, in this earth-moving instance, that it was infinitely so?

Had the Critter Company been meeting at the Taberna Aztlán in Belen, Héctor might have been tempted to stop by Our Lady afterward for Saturday-afternoon Confession. As it was, he escaped the Pink House under cover of twenty-five jostling Critters, without Jacinta Ruiz seeing him leave. ◈

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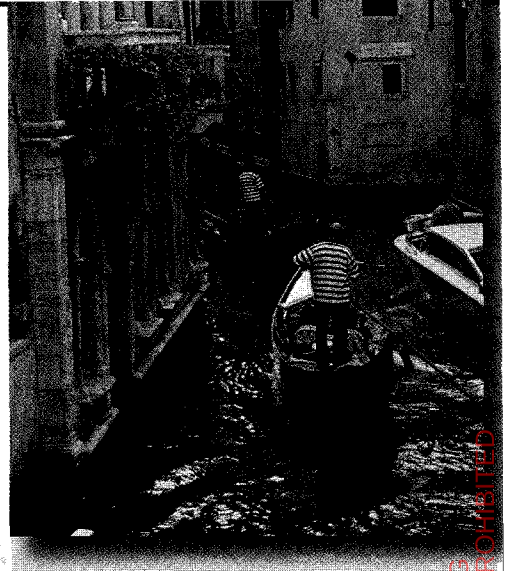

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